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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

A CONSTRUCTION AND DECONSTRUCTION OF 'NATIVE' IN NATIVE EDUCATION

by

Monica Kreiner ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF EDUCATION

in

INTERNATIONAL/INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY STUDIES

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING, 1995

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Monica Kreiner
Student's signature

4, 6720 - 112 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T6H 3J8
Address

Date: December 2, 1994

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled A CONSTRUCTION AND DECONSTRUCTION OF 'NATIVE' IN NATIVE EDUCATION submitted by MONICA KREINER in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF EDUCATION in INTERNATIONAL/INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION.

M. Assheton-Smith (supervisor)

J. Jagodzinski

S. Wilson

Date: October 3, 1994

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Betty Norris-Profitt:

without whose inspiration I would not have dared undertake this journey,

without whose support I would surely have given up countless times,

without whose example I would never have witnessed the combination of wholistic and critical thinking,

without whose patience I would never have endured,

without whose faith I would never have been inspired to trust the process,

without whose wisdom I would have been left circling instead of spiralling to new places.

Thank you, Betty.

ABSTRACT

This is a study of the social construction of 'Native' as it pertains to Native education. Ways of coming to knowledge are problematized in relation to their creation of the 'Other', in this case 'Native'. The author opts to use autobiography and textual analysis to examine the creation of the constructs of 'Native' and their reinforcement in the academic literature on Native education. The essentializing notions inherent in these constructions are deconstructed through an examination of aspects that move away from the normalizing tendencies of these identities. The conclusions are multiple involving more fluid identities that continually reshape to meet new requirements and the process of healing to exorcise the imposition of fixed categories.

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CHAPTER 1

A LETTER FROM ME TO YOU

Where Have the Warriors Gone? (excerpt)

"...

dear grandmother what would you do?
would you laugh or would you cry?
the only friends i have, the white man

i see a vision in my mind of an old porcupine
remember how he came to us in darkness
we wondered why he didn't fear or hate us

how we marvelled that he didn't associate us
with the traps other brown hands had set
instead carried a dead reminder on three good legs

and i with a question that any child would
turned my face to your years of wisdom
asked why he didn't shower us with quills

didn't you say because he hungered, needed
he had to learn to trust another face
not of his colour, not of his creed, or kind

didn't you say forgiving is the lame old leg
we sometimes have to carry around reminding
that we cannot hate all for one sin done

beneath our skin, sinew for sinew, bone for bone
white or brown, yellow or black, skin for skin
we are all the same, we love, we die, we sin

i have a long way to travel on life's road
i cannot carry hate upon my back and yet
i cannot forget that i am cree

..."

Willow Barton

Edmonton, Fall, 1994

Dear Reader,

I am writing you a letter because a letter suggests a dialogue, an interaction between me the writer and you the reader. I hope you will read what follows with that interactiveness in mind. I write my thoughts, reflections, ideas, discoveries not as an authority on these matters but rather in the hope that it will provoke some of your own thoughts.

I begin this thesis with the word 'I' as I am telling this story from my own perspective. I make no claims to 'objective' truth, rather to insightful reflection. This 'story' is not factual but it is truthful and as such it contains seeds of understanding that I believe will help myself and other people to expand our comprehension of complex social phenomenon.

I am learning a new way of writing and this is one of my first substantial efforts in this direction. In my old way of writing, I worked at making clear points in progressive succession towards presenting an argument. I remember in school doing reading comprehension exercises where one of the questions was often to synthesize and summarize the points being made in the story or article. I was good in school and I figured out what the desired answer was, looking for the obvious and never reading a text as if it might mean something else. My pat answers were rewarded with good grades and I saw this as the only correct way of proceeding. I also prepared my written work in much the same way; an introduction would outline what follows, each point would make up a section and the conclusion would refer to all of them in making the final point or argument. I now see how this method of writing is based on certain assumptions, certain ways of knowing, a certain epistemology that I have come to see as limiting. The assumptions that this old style contain are that linear logic is of the highest order, and the type of clarity associated with it is the only valued way of knowing. These assumptions parade as truths; not as the guesses that they are. My cross-cultural experiences have hinted to me of other ways of knowing that do not fit into the dominant Western schema.

Someone suggested that I acknowledge the dominant Western schema for its contribution to knowledge. Though my work be different, it does not need to be seen as a condemnation of much of what has gone before; rather a new approach building on the past. I think of the arguments around the prefix post- as it pertains to postmodernity. It seems to allude to a sense of 'after' but 'with/in' (Lather, 1991) might express more of the sense. In this same way, my work both springs from with/in Western thinking and is reflective of it. There has been much talk about integrating different types of knowledge (Western and Native, male and female, etc.). I see this work as a step in that process.

So I have opted for another way of writing, another style, another set of underlying assumptions. One of my reasons is that it is novel and therefore challenges the old dominant order. But more than just to reflect resistance, I write in this new way because I am coming to think/feel/act in it. This style is circuitous; sometimes I will say something and follow it by what appears to be its opposite, pointing to a paradox or contradiction but also to an interconnection, for I am beginning to see everything as containing its opposite. I will return to the same themes, issues, approaches throughout in a spiralling effect that allows me to be at (or near) the same place but a little farther in the journey.[1] These are very much desires that I outline here in the hope that I can live up to my coveted outcome.

This is the only chapter I have chosen to write as a unified text. What follows is written in two columns. The first or left is the main body of the text. The right contains some of my initial reflections, additions, clarifications, puzzlements in response to my own text. Sometimes I include a story that I think relates. Other times I do what I call 'making transparent' or pointing to the text to see how it is constructed, to look at its underlying assumptions. I do this partly to encourage you to also engage with the written word. I also do this because I need a space to think through what I am doing. It fits with my new thinking that pushes at new (to me) ways of knowing.

As the walls between academic disciplines collapse, I find myself, a social scientist, turning to literature to discover knowledge/truth. That is why I began this introduction with a poem.

This poem speaks with the 'Native' voice, a Cree voice. It speaks to me of learning lessons from what we observe in nature and listening to the wisdom of elders. The messages are widespread and universal: forgiveness, acceptance and interconnection with all that is. The message is relevant to the text contained herein yet it is paradoxically stereotypical of what we perceive as 'Native' conceptions of the world and in so being contradicts what I will be presenting. For as the words speak of a forgiveness, I, a non-Native person, might find comfort knowing the legacy of misunderstanding, prejudice, racism, fear and hatred. But I hope to speak not for the cleansing of our sins or the creation of a new philosophical equilibrium but rather for a living with our sins in new, reshaping ways.

An expression I hear frequently these days is 'take what you can [i.e. what is useful to you] and leave the rest'. This applies equally to this poem as it does to this text.

I see the poem above as connected to the prose of a letter that was shared with me by my Cree instructor. It was written by a Native mother, reprinted from the Ontario Native Women's Association Newsletter. I quote excerpts of this letter at length:

---

[1] I am still very much an apprentice in this spiral (versus linear) mode of thought. I thank Betty for her years of persistent teaching and demonstration of this other way.

> Dear Teacher,
>
> "Before you take charge of the classroom that contains my child, please ask yourself why you are going to teach Indian children. What are your expectations? ...
>
> Write down and examine all the information and opinions you possess about Indians. What are the stereotypes and untested assumptions that you bring with you into the classroom? How many negative attitudes towards Indians will you put before my child? ...
>
> My child does not need to be rescued, he [sic] does not consider being Indian a misfortune. He has a culture, probably older than yours, he has meaningful values and a rich and varied experiential background. However strange or incomprehensible it may seem to you ...
>
> He doesn't speak standard English, but he is no way 'linguistically handicapped'. If you will take the time and courtesy to listen and observe carefully, you will see that he and the other Indian children communicate very well, both among themselves and with other Indians. They speak 'functional' English, very effectively augmented by their fluency in the silent language, the subtle, unspoken communication of facial expressions, gestures, body movement and the use of personal space.
>
> You will be well advised to remember that our children are skillful interpreters of the silent language. They will know your feelings and attitudes with unerring precision, no matter how carefully you arrange your smile or modulate your voice. ...
>
> Will he learn that his sense of his own value and dignity is valid, or will he learn that he must forever be apologetic and 'trying harder' because he isn't white? Can you help him acquire the intellectual skills he needs without at the same time imposing your values on top of those he already has?
>
> Respect my child. He is a person. He has a right to be himself.
>
> Yours very sincerely,
> His mother." (Anonymous, 1977)

The reason I bring this letter forward is not so much to emphasize its content, although it is most interesting, but rather to reflect on my Cree instructor's comments accompanying her reading of this letter. She de-emphasized the Native issue but spoke of this letter in the broader context of teachers and students in general and students who may be different from the teacher in any way not only by their racial heritage. She spoke of this twice, two days in a row, emphasizing not the difficulties Native children have in school (a widely held assumption in academic literature) but of teaching to diversity.

She teaches two Cree classes, one primarily of Native students, one a mixture with more non-Native students. Somehow, in hearing her speak about the broader context of this letter, I felt assured that she had examined her own prejudices to Native and non-Native students as a teacher. I rest assured, as her student, that I am being seen as a person, not a white. I find myself looking at the other students, their cultural connection being less an issue of race than of other factors in their life like marriage, or jobs -- their cultural connection becoming unimportant.

By now I'm sure you're wondering what this thesis is about. I wish I could give you a quick, one paragraph summary but that would smack of the writing style I am relinquishing. Ironically, I have had to write an abstract (it's required) so if this issue concerns you greatly, I refer you to it.

I have struggled long and hard with developing a research question which, I was told, is the imperative of a thesis writing student who wishes to delimit their work to a containable effort. The next chapter speaks to this struggle in more detail. I am not sure what my resistance to this process has been other than to say that, for me, questions invoke answers and I have only hunches. A feminist writes about this in relation to 'masculine interrogation' which I understand to mean the dominant society's interrogative tendency:

> "As soon as the question 'What is it?' is posed, from the moment a question is put, as soon as a reply is sought, *we are already caught up in a masculine interrogation*. I say 'masculine interrogation': as we say so-and-so was interrogated by the police. And this interrogation precisely involves the work of signification: 'What is it? Where is it?' A work of meaning, 'This means that,' the predicative distribution that always at the same time order the constitution of meaning." (Cixous, 1981, pg. 45)

At one time, I did pose a question that read something like this (I'm quoting from memory because it was so unimportant that I can't even find where I wrote it any more): "What have the group of Native people from the family healing centre that I have been involved with for a few years taught me about 'Native' by journeying with me in my own learning process?" What I have retained from this is the sense that my project is one of discovery and description of that discovery. I have broadened my approach to include what I have been learning through my reading at university. I have narrowed my approach to address 'Native' as it pertains to 'Native education' although this focusing happens later in the text.

I am non-Native (of here, I am a Native of Germany), non-Indian, non-aboriginal (of here, I am an aboriginal of Europe). My referencing my European aboriginality parodies the use of these labels. Much of what I intend to write will point to our taxonomies as problematic.

I remember struggling with the issue of writing about Native education as a non-Native person. I voiced my concerns to a Native woman who replied by giving me her wholehearted endorsement and permission precisely because I was struggling with the issue. I believe her point could have been summarized by Ellsworth's words

> "If you can talk to me in ways that show you understand that your knowledge of me, the world, and 'the Right thing to do' will always be partial, interested, and potentially oppressive to others, and if I can do the same, then we can work together on shaping and reshaping alliances for constructing circumstances in which students of difference can thrive." (Ellsworth, 1992, p. 115)

The paradox is that I am ending up writing about myself and my navigation in dominant society concerning 'Natives', rather than *about* Natives.

In an article about thinking, feeling and learning related to Native education, Couture (1985) suggests:

> "that the ideal, traditional way to learn basic Native values and behaviour would be to apprentice to an Elder, and that the next best thing would be simply to live among Natives and learn from social interactions." (pg. 185)

For three years now, I have been consciously and intentionally living among Cree people, especially through my involvement with the family healing centre I mentioned above. Yet, I have really been living among them all of my life for Native people form a part of my earliest memories as a child. My best childhood friends were Native, the watchful neighbour to whom I brought my teenage problems and by whom I continue to be mentored is Native, my foster siblings were often Native (one of whom I am still very close with), my peers at school and later at work were Native. What has marked my current reflection about these associations has been what they have and are teaching me about myself. A similar tension exists where the stereotypes seem to fit as where they are broken.

I don't wish to trace my interest in Native education here, other than to say that these things emerge through life experiences, the people we know, chance events and personal inclinations. I remember the decision to academically explore in this area. It was closely followed by the white guilt of being yet another academic writing about the 'Other'. So it was with relief when I discovered that I could only write about myself, as all others before me, and it was up to me to choose whether I wanted to couch my writing in objective language that made it appear as universal truths or recognize my subjectivity and the truths contained therein.

I do not see my place as representative. My role is not to go and find out what 'Native' is and then present it in academic journals so that we may better understand the 'Other.' My purpose is not to study 'them' but rather my own learning. Equally important is that my purpose not be the making of space so that we can fit some token 'Natives' into the slightly modified structures of the dominant way of knowing in order to integrate (read assimilate) the voices of the previously silenced. What this is about is peeling away the layers of my collusion as well as my resistance to the structures that shape my relations to the 'Other' or 'Native people.' In so doing, I believe new opportunities for interaction and association between people(s) become possible.

Please forgive me my anger at the dominant ideology that has hurt me and so many others. My shedding of this old skin which still feels putrid to me is so strongly contrasted with the freshness of a new one in which to rejoice. I still feel the bars of the prison that contained my thinking and acting, not yet forgiving others for putting me there or myself for remaining. My anger is doubled for the pain I see and empathize with for others who have been so damaged by the labelling and categorizing in the name of scientific progress. We are reaping a bitter harvest of racism, violence, dis-ease, etc. The edges of my anger are sharp. Forgive me for not having forgiven and moved beyond, for not seeing the good in what still appears to me as hurtful, at least not yet. My very presentation of the dominant ideology is left wanting because of this anger and I apologize by trying to struggle through to a new way of thinking about this.

There is one more thing I need you to know about my writing. I write with a candle burning and a glass of water upon which to focus my eyes in reflection. These are perhaps symbolic of the campfire and the rolling waves or trickling streams I believe we have all gazed at in contemplation. Sometimes I wake up in the morning knowing what I need to write here, allowing the words and ideas to come from a place other than exclusively intellectual endeavour. I do not want to allude to divine inspiration rather to a recognition of a broader range of coming to know. This contains some fear of pain because I know that I submit these words to others for their approval and revision before I firmly set them in bound print.

I wish you a *good* journey into and with my words.

Sincerely,

Monica Kreiner

Monica Kreiner

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY - THOUGHTFUL DISMISSALS

There *is* no beginning, I *make* a beginning. I decide where to begin, what I deem an appropriate point of departure. Said (1979) speaks of beginning as a methodological issue. Wîya recognizes that wîya began delimiting wîya's work, deciding what to exclude, in order to find a point of departure. In much the same way, I am beginning from the point of having excluded much already. Some of these exclusions are explicit, many are not named, at least not by me.

I have arrived at a methodology for this, my thesis, through a series of dismissals. The reasons for these rejections are significant because they journal my discovery process as well as my current, tentative, shifting and partial ideological position.

Many people have asked me, "So what are you doing your thesis on?" My responses have varied considerably. It has been in this process of developing my explanations that I have come to understand my topic more clearly. It is, therefore, this chronology of developing the ideas through reflection with others that I will pursue to display the dismissals. But as this process is about thesis writing, it is also about some much larger shiftings in my thinking and my being.

REJECTING 'HARD' SCIENCE

My initial approach to thesis writing was as a learning process, my goal being to learn something of which I knew very little. I took a quantitative research methodology course and

I find that sometimes I read authors differently when I know their gender. I have chosen to use a neutral term to designate the gender of the authors that I cite in my text. The word 'wîya' is the Cree third person singular pronoun (he/she/it) and possessive pronoun (his/her/its). It is genderless and speaks of all animate things such as people or animals or even such things as rocks, thus even decentring humanity. It is rarely used because the context often indicates the subject of a phrase.

To suggest that these events actually took place chronologically is but a narrative tool I use to 'represent' a rather complex process of discovery. Nothing happens as simply as it will be described here.

To suggest that the process is only one of intellectual endeavour is erroneous. Non-academic, non-intellectual experiences in my life have often challenged my thinking. As Lather suggests that poststructuralism is "not so much about a seismic cultural shift as it is about the Academy catching up with one" (1991, p. 89), my intellectual development has often been a catching up with or coming to understand other things going on in my life.

This dismissal of 'hard science' in one easy swoop is portrayed as a personal choice. It is, nevertheless, related to a larger discussion on the rejection of positivism that will follow. But such a simple rejection is not intended to decided I would do a neat, fully contained quantitative project. It became quickly evident to me that my choices of topic, design, sample, method of analysis, etc. would by definition skew my results. Research as self-fulfilling prophecy became evident to me. My colleagues suggested that I make careful choices, be explicit about them and proceed nevertheless. But I could not think of a question to which a quantitatively derived answer would be meaningful or relevant. Knowledge so derived would either justify existing power structures or work to refine what Foucault calls the "technologies of regulation and surveillance" (Lather, 1991, pg. 15). My political conscience would not let me proceed with this methodology. The exercise had taught me what I did not want to do.

WRITING THE FAMILIAR BEGINS

My thesis advisor suggested that I write about something I knew. Since my new focus area was Native education, the logical choice was the family healing centre based on aboriginal values in which I had been involved for almost three years. I will fictionalize this centre in this text, suggesting only that it is located somewhere in Cree country. The name I have chosen for it is 'mâmawonanâtawihow'kamik' which, loosely translated, means family healing centre. The centre approaches education in a multi-generational and multi-faceted informal approach. I find our ways of functioning intriguing because they are very different from what I have experienced through my involvement in various other organizations.

dismiss possible fruitful endeavours using quantitative methods. It only indicates that I could not find any related to my topic at the time.

I have to admit that part of my orientation towards quantitative research was its appealing distancing of the self from the research. I recall a foreign graduate student who was active in community development initiatives in his home country lamenting that despite knowing what he wanted to do in his work, he felt forced to leave family, friends and support to attain a credential that legitimized his work. He saw the educating process as an intrusion into his existing knowledge and hoped that it would not intrude too deeply, demanding more from him than he already reluctantly sacrificed.

The academic process frequently sees the student as lacking, an empty vessel in need of filling, a bank in need of a deposit (Freire, 1970). But this myth rejects the notion that students enter the academic process complete, ready to interact, to be changed and to change. There are, in this process, limits which one establishes to guard oneself, limits I thought would be easier to defend within a quantitative process. It was a risk to choose to write otherwise.

When I began working with my Cree instructor to find a fictional name for the place the imperfection of translation from one language to another seemed an appropriate metaphor for the imperfection of language as description. The word 'family' as we know it in

Rejecting the objectivity myth

My immediate reaction to studying the centre was trepidation--how could I write about us, how could I objectify us? I felt that I would have to wrench something out of my heart in order to examine it from all angles. To be objective would mean that I would have to distance myself from the object under study. To objectify the 'Other' I would need to see them as different from me. How could I, I was such a part of it and it of me. At the centre, I only saw an 'us.'

Weber Pillwax (1992) talks about her dislike, as a Native person, of being objectified in the study of Native education. Wîya is explicit about the lack of objectivity in wîya's work.

> "when we relate as two individuals, especially from two different cultural groups, we are both observers of each other, and the degree of accuracy of my observations depends on the very same factors as the degree of accuracy of your observations. Neither of us, however, can claim objectivity. We have no way of looking at ourselves from outside of our own individual and interactive experience." (Weber Pillwax, 1992, pg. 6)

There is fear in the rejection of objectivity, fear of a pervading "relativism and its seeming attendant nihilism or Nietzschean anger" (Lather, 1991, pg. xi). Lather suggests an arrogance in this position: "if we cannot know anything, then we can know nothing'" (ibid). We do not cease to know, but rather we come to know differently. We come to know with a recognition of our positioning in the act

English has no direct equivalent in Cree. A rarely used Cree term suggesting family talks of 'one blood' or the nuclear family concept of man and woman united to form child. In Cree, kinship terms are significant as is the notion of extended family but the broad sense of family is known through the word more equivalent to our sense of 'home' (wîkinân). In creating a new descriptor/interpreter, we settled on the prefix 'everybody' added to healing. Therefore a direct translation of mâmawonanâtawihow'kamik would be 'everybody healing building.' This is not the possessive idea of everybody's centre but rather carries the idea of everybody engaged in healing.

I am keenly aware of my use of pronouns in this section. When I talk about 'I' 'my' 'us' 'we' 'they' 'them' 'my friends' etc. I am defining/delimiting/designating how I talk about complex and changing relationships.

It was not always true that I didn't notice the differences of race, class and gender. I was frequently aware of my 'whiteness' among many, though not only, brown faces. When this issue arose, it was most frequently I who brought it up from my own discomfort.

of knowing.

In rejecting conventional methods, Brookes (1992) speaks of a colleague who quit wîya's studies because wîya felt like a *ghost writer* of wîya's own work. Wîya was forced to write in a detached, academic manner to be acceptable and wîya could not contend with this demand. Brookes's own struggle with this issue expressed how writing within the norms of objective research meant "writing about *those* women *out there*" (Ibid, pg. 11) in a way that missed the complexities of their lives. Wîya discovered that wîya's personal research problem was indeed a universal one.

By embracing the familiar, I rejected the illusion of objectivity.

ACTION RESEARCH

In looking for an approach, my advisor suggested that I ask our group what I should research about us. I quickly recognized the implicit judgement of *lack* in this position. By asking, "What can I give you?" I'm suggesting there is something that you don't have that you need/want.

A colleague suggested that there are always things she wishes she had time and energy to discover and so why would an organization not be in the same position? But is not the unending quest for knowledge related to the hope that we can know more and more in order to be better and better and even perfect? This is the enlightenment project, an endeavour seriously under question to which I will now turn my attention.

I frequently allude to colleagues or professors or advisors or others who have contributed to my process. By indicating their effects on my thinking, I am making more apparent the intellectual process as a collaborative one between many people. This is an effort to decenter my authority as author, to dispute myself as sole inventor in this project.

Post-positivism

The Enlightenment phenomenon, originating some three hundred years ago in Europe, was about the

> "intentions of science to liberate reason from the dictates of kings and priests ... inscribed into practices of control and prediction. These practices were rooted in a binary logic of hermetic subjects and objects and a linear, teleological rationality; the innocence of both observable facts and transparent language were assumed." (Lather, 1991, pg. 104)

It is the assumptions upon which enlightenment thought were based that are being questioned, positivism being one. Positivism as defined in the Dictionary of Sociology is "characterized mainly by an insistence that science can only deal with observable entities known directly to experience" (Abercrombie, Hill and Turner, 1984, pg. 190). Postmodernity speaks of postpositivism.

> "Positivism has been displaced, or so we hope. The program of making everything knowable through the supposedly impersonal norms and procedures of 'science' has been radically questioned. The hope of constructing a 'grand narrative,' either intellectually or political, that will give us the ultimate truth and will lead us to freedom has been shattered in many ways." (Apple in the introduction to Lather, 1991, pg. vii)

This notion of grand narratives is one that Lyotard also addresses when wîya points out how they have "legitimate[d] social and political institutions and practices, forms of legislation, ethics,

Rarely will I use definitions in this project. Definitions are neat illusions about the transparency of language. They suggest that a word can be known, once and for all, in its multitude of possible meanings. I prefer to hint at words, use them within contexts, work them, mould them, shape them--continually aware of their fluidity. This is particularly the case with words I have come to know through my reading of and in postmodernity.

I am writing this text "within/in the postmodern" (Lather, 1991, title). Postmodernity is neither a theory, approach, or paradigm. I prefer the descriptor 'sensibility.' I have found efforts at defining this term more constrictive than useful so I will proceed with operationalizing inherent and related concepts.

modes of thought, and symbolics" (Lyotard, 1992, pg. 50). These grand narratives exercise influence on research methodologies. Questioning them encourages a rejection of the objectivity myth.

Primacy of thought

The second aspect of the Enlightenment project that I wish to discuss is the primacy of thought. Lecompte (1993) suggests that emancipatory research is more than just "'ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.'" The concern of critical theorists practising action research is to transfer "critical thought into emancipatory action" (Lather, 1991, pg. 109). The possession of knowledge is considered insufficient but it's implication as 'the' way to know is not problematized.

Branson and Miller (1992) argue that it was in the Enlightenment period that a certain type of rationality and mechanistic science gained prominence to the exclusion of other modes. This was an ideological shift. The hierarchy that placed God at its apex was replaced with one with Man (sic) at its helm. Humans were believed to have the ability to solve all the world's mysteries with scientific rationality and mechanistic science.

In Lather's self critique wîya admits that "[e]nlightment goals are unproblematized, especially the excessive faith in the powers of the reasoning mind" (1991, pg. 84).

Ellsworth (1992) further develops these ideas in wîya's article entitled: "Why doesn't this feel empowering? Working through the repressive myths of critical pedagogy." Wîya suggests that the primacy of reason in critical pedagogical approaches has been debunked by poststructuralism's recognition of the partiality of positions. This has specific implications for how the 'subject' of one's work is viewed:

> "rational argument has operated in ways that set up as its opposite an irrational Other, which has been understood historically as the province of women and other exotic Others." (Ibid, pg. 94)

I would like to suggest that 'exotic Other' seems to include some recent work in Native education. Urion's (1991) editorial to the Canadian Journal of Native Education suggests that readers think about the academic discourse and the First Nations discourse on education as two separate things. The former, wîya suggests, is based on dialectic thinking that continually measures all things Native against the dominant culture. The latter has, as a foundational belief, the integrity of the person. Weber-Pillwax (1992) rejects beginning with the parts in an attempt to reconstruct the whole (mechanistic science) preferring to work with the whole. Couture speaks of a "Native mindfulness" (1991, pg. 53) involving reliance on subjectivity.

I believe I have begun to learn some things about other ways of knowing. The first step was a recognition of the limitations of my academic ways of knowing.

DESCRIPTION

I have begun to describe my growing fascination with the potential of the mâmawonanâtawihow'kamik as focus for my academic research. It is

The authors I cite here would be considered 'Native.' Does that affect the way I write and/or think about their work?

I have come to this text through a multitude of ways of knowing. One is dreams. Often I will awake and be inspired with an idea that asks to be written here. I comply, as a vehicle of transmission.

There is violence in objectifying. It is now that Europeans are beginning to acknowledge the guilt of their complicity in this violence.

fascinating to me because it's richness has pushed at me both personally and intellectually in unimaginable ways. I began to wonder how I could describe this. My attention turned to ethnographic methodologies.

I felt deeply uneasy about my shifting role from participant to participant-observer. I felt like I began to eavesdrop, to listen with the intent of pulling information out for my own purposes. Trinh Minh-ha talks of the work of anthropologists as gossip. "The 'conversation of man (sic) with man' [anthropology] is, therefore, mainly a conversation of 'us' with 'us' about 'them,' of the white man with the white man about the primitive-native man." (Trinh Minh-ha, 1989, pg. 65)

When I spoke about this discomfort with colleagues, I was encouraged to examine the ethical issues of the consent of centre members. I had their consent, at least broadly they had agreed that I could study us. What I felt uncomfortable with was the form that my representation of them/us would take. I could interview, tape, transcribe, edit, present it for a member check to make sure of my accuracy. I could proceed with analysis but I knew that despite all these efforts, I would really be telling my version of the story/gossip. I would be inscribing, not describing (Lather, 1991, pg. 91).

> "Patai stresses the centrality of asking what right we have to intrude into the lives of others and the inequalities attendant upon relationships of researcher/researched and writer/written about. Emphasizing what Foucault terms 'the indignity of speaking for others' ... she shows how a focus on the excluded and marginalized functions

When I spoke with a fellow member about my thesis plans for describing our organization, she suggested I seek out the elders who could *really* tell me about anything I might want to know about Cree culture including all the unfamiliarity I had noticed for myself in our group dynamics. I resisted this idea because I felt that an intermittently visiting elder would have a limited point of view.

I feel very cautious in how I describe this centre because it is a shifting complexity difficult to capture in static words. "As I write, I face the inescapability of reductionism. Language is delimitation, a strategic limitation of possible meanings. It frames; it brings into focus by that which goes unremarked" (Lather, 1991, pg. xix)

> both as intrusive surveillance and examination and as counter-disciplinary practice." (Ibid, pg. 99).

Whose benefit?

The other side of the ethical question that was posed to me simultaneously was, "Who would my research benefit?" The answer to this question was assumed to justify my request for permission, suggesting people would be more willing to participate if they saw the potential benefit of the work to themselves or others like them.

I had no illusions of helping people, a thesis on a shelf would not contribute greatly to the further understanding of eclectic, healing motivated, aboriginal centred, informal adult educational endeavours. Though I found the dynamics of this group fascinating, I'm not sure the description would be 'useful' in the sense of describing some new phenomenon of which this group would be representative. It would be like trying to make a round peg fit into a square hole.

What would my contribution to knowledge be? I know that I have/am/will gain greatly from this process of exploration and reflection. An engaged reader may benefit greatly from his or her own reflection. The contribution of this thesis to 'knowledge' is as fleeting as the writer's and reader's engagement. This is no different from other works.

The ultimate purpose of the research was to contribute to my procurement of a credential. The process of writing a thesis is about my own personal gain. I engage in this process to obtain a reward, a credential, which primarily

The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association which theses in my department are encouraged to rely for formatting information warns against colloquial language. I find expressions such as "round peg into a square hole" illustrative in ways unavailable in more literally descriptive manners.

Journaling dreams is useful to the writer, diaries are useful to the writers and, if there are any, the readers. My description would likely be useful in these same ways of flushing out meanings, reflecting, looking for the hidden in the obvious. By questioning its usefulness, it is within the traditional paradigm of science that this becomes an issue.

benefits me. I may choose to take a portion of this work and present it for publication or at a conference in which it will add to academic discussions more broadly and to my vitae. Otherwise, benefit is precarious at best.

Opaque language

Part of my hesitation about ethnographic description was the assumption that my words describe an actual reality, that language is transparent. This was touched upon as an assumption of Enlightenment. Its refutation is significant and premises postmodernity's crisis of representation. Let me explain this in more detail.

Structuralism, as developed by de Saussure, holds that language is a tool we use to describe some objective reality. A sign consists of a signifier (the word) and a signified (the actual object). Derrida's poststructuralism posits that the signifier is not as closely related with the signified as it is with other signifiers. Words are known only through definitions which consist of other words. We then have the signifying chain of words, an eternal connection (Sarup, 1990). Meanings are continually deferred, they exist only in relation to other meanings and, in particular, to what is excluded. "Language, far from reflecting an already given social reality, constitutes social reality for us" (Weedon, 1987, pg. 22). Though seeming to represent the 'signified' it is actually creating, producing or constituting our way of seeing.

> "The recent linguistic turn in social theory focuses on the power of language to organize our thought and experience. Language is seen as both carrier and creator of a

> "Given the postmodern tenet of how we are inscribed in that which we struggle against, how can I intervene in the production of knowledge at particular sites in ways that work out of the blood and spirit of our lives, rather than out of the consumerism of ideas that can pass for a life of the mind in academic theory?" (Lather, 1991, pg. 20)

If words are so closely related to other words, what is related to the blank space in this right column; to the absence of words?

> culture's epistemological codes. The ways we speak and write are held to influence our conceptual boundaries and to create areas of silence as language organizes meaning in terms of pre-established categories." (Lather, 1991, pg. 111)

This thinking is often described as a 'crisis in representation' because the relationship between object (signified) and it's representation (signifier) are no longer seen as direct.

Awareness of the 'slippery slope' of language, it's tentativeness, its partiality, its inclusions and exclusions leads one to see how language is used anew. Language constructs meaning, words constitute their signified. How I write about something creates it.

This recognition at first paralysed me. How could I, in all good consciousness, write ethnographically knowing that I was not simply describing, I was creating. I looked to those critiquing existing power relations who were also acutely aware of how we are "inheritor[s] of the very system of signs [we set] out to question, disturb, and shatter" (Trinh Minh-ha, 1989, pg. 71). We are "paradoxically aware of [our] complicity in that which [we] critique" (Lather, 1991, pg. 10). Lather further sees language as inescapable reductionism, delimitation and framing. The key becomes awareness of the complicity, acceptance of the parameters and a writing style that pointed at it's own construction. The change wîya advocates is in form.

Use of language

I believe that this would be a good time to begin to discuss some of my use

Lather speaks of a possible negative of postmodernism for non-elites as it's denial of the maldistribution of power and resources because of its focus on a 'languacentricity' and on aesthetics over ethics.

> "Spanos writes that the most useful work in the present crisis of representation 'is that which uses form to disrupt received forms and undermines an objective, disinterested stance'" (Lather, 1991, pg. 150)

> "Thus, although it has become de rigueur in ethnic criticism to refer

of language to label in this text. The question of language is a difficult one because descriptive words tend to categorize both the people of whom one is speaking and the way in which one chooses to speak. Nevertheless, choosing a language is necessary and I will be explicit about some of the assumptions in the words I am using.

Political correctness is much in vogue yet at times I find its strictures dangerously stifling. The politically correct term to describe what were known as *Indians* or *Natives* is now *First Nations* or by reference to the nation grouping such as *Cree* or *Anishinabe*. *Indigenous* people are known as *aboriginal* people. Those of mixed blood, the *halfbreeds*, are once again known as *Métis* who collectively make up the *Métis Nation*. Speaking of others is even more difficult; are we *whites? Euro-Canadians? Non-Natives?*

I had been asked to draft a small brochure describing the mâmawonanâtawihow'kamik. Basing my work on our official objectives, I used the word 'aboriginal' to describe the value base of our activities. As I was circulating the brochure for comments one of the members who lives on the reserve asked me the meaning of 'aboriginal.' I replied that to me it meant the original inhabitants of an area. His response was to tell me, in no uncertain terms, that he was an 'Indian'.

Trinh Minh-ha on the issue of naming:

> "Has anything changed since 'indigenous' took over, rendering 'native' obsolete? Whatever the answer, if you want to avoid sounding like an old(-fashioned) racist, a colonist, a backward

> to the original inhabitants of the American continent as 'Native Americans' in order to avoid the, not slur, but misnomer 'Indians,' the various Indian nations have followed the human pattern of calling themselves 'people' and calling others less flattering things." (Sollers, 1986, pg. 27)

Most of these signifiers are capitalized: Indian, Cree, Euro-Canadian. Some authors speak of native and others of Native. Through my instruction in the Cree language, I am learning to write without capitalization or punctuation. What is the implication of capitalization?

How easy it would be to dismiss the words of my fellow member describing himself as 'Indian' and suggest that he has 'false consciousness' and is not aware of his identity. Or to talk about him as being inscribed with the dominant ideology, lost under its pressures no differently than the rest of us. Or to accuse him of a simple ignorance of not knowing the current terminology--how for political reasons 'Indian' was dropped in favour of 'First Nations' or tribal groupings like 'Cree' (Jenson, 1993). But things are not as simple as they appear for I know that his political involvement reaches to the highest tribal councils of this country and his self-identity is strong.

> SETTLER, be sure never to talk about manifestations of 'primitive religion': 'devil-worship,' 'fetishism,' 'animism,' and the like are a no-(liberal)-man's-land [sic]. Remember, 'traditional religions'--yes, 'religion' is the 'right' expression--for that is how equality is distributed, given or gained." (Trinh Minh-ha, 1989, pg. 52-3)

By sticking to the currently politically correct terms (First Nations, Métis and I'm not sure of the third), I would be placing this work within the current thinking and therefore the current limitations in thinking. I will therefore use all of these terms to indicate a breadth of reference. Joycechild suggests that "'we need to unlearn political correctness, and move away from an oversimplified, monolithic, there's-one-best-way mode of presentation'" (Lather, 1991, pg. 144).

I would like to speak of people and not the categories that pigeon-hole these people into neat descriptive labels. In fact, this is the very point that I hope this work will successfully address.

Description revisited

I had come to see that description is clearly not a neutral endeavour and that my choice of language was significant. I did not dismiss description totally, but began to look at it differently:

> "Data might be better conceived as the material for telling a story where the challenge becomes to generate a polyvalent data base that is used to *vivify* interpretation as opposed to 'support' or 'prove'" (Lather, 1991, pg. 91).

In this I saw potential. I could use my

In reviewing some of my initial drafts of this treatise, I have noticed an absence in my voice of the term 'First Nations'. In reflecting on this absence, I have come to understand that I resist what I perceive to be a purely political naming. I am much more comfortable with the resurgence of the political connotations in the existing word 'Indian' than an expression that seems to exist only for political reasons. I also believe in reclaiming words, such as 'Indian', and reshaping their meanings.

> "a shift in emphasis away from what we could call scientific knowledge towards what should properly be considered as a form of narrative knowledge. Rather than knowing the essence of a thing, we begin to tell the story of the event of judging it, and to enact the narrative of how it

experiences at the centre to "'illustrate rather than claim'" (Lather, 1991, pg. 150, quoting Van Maanen).

The question remained, what was I illustrating and vivifying? Still fascinated by the mâmawonanâtawihow'kamik, I began to think about questions. I became guided by the idea of examining what the mâmawonanâtawihow'kamik has taught me about the meaning of 'Native' and applying that to the 'Native' implied in 'Native education.' This would involve examining the construction of the concept 'Native' rather than describing 'Natives.' Chow (1993) speaks of ceasing to refine the authentic Native category and examining our fascination with how and why we have created the idea of 'Native' in the project of modernity.

Francis's (1992) work became a guiding beacon. Wîya wrote a book entitled The Imaginary Indian in which wîya examined the construction of the myths of the Indian in Canada throughout its history. I opted for a contemporary approach, recognizing history's imprinting upon the present. My focus will be on education.

CONTEXTUALIZE

Since my place as author of the text is recognized as positioned, then I would need to be explicit about my perspective. This is a common practice in feminist research that emphasizes contextualizing the self in the text. Chow describes this as "discursive imperatives--'Always contextualize! Never essentialize!'" (1993, pg. 6). It is, I believe, rooted in Gramsci's work on ideology

> changes consciousness and thus produces a new knowledge. ... The postmodern prefers the event of knowing to the fact of knowledge, so to speak." (Docherty, 1993, p. 25)

Sometimes framing this work around the issue of identity or 'Native' has felt like trying to fit a square peg into a round hole. Though this issue pertains to the mâmawonanâtawihow'kamik, it is only one possible framing of many and none fit neatly.

> "'the starting-point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is 'knowing thyself' as a product of the historical process to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory.'" (Said, 1979, pg. 25 quoting Gramsci)

Lecompte warns that an over emphasis on contextualizing texts creates an extreme relativism which "functions in the end to justify the status quo in the same way that structural functionalism does" (LeCompte, 1993, pg. 12). What I write could easily be dismissed because of my overt and explicit ideological positioning.

> "'Scientists firmly believe that as long as they are not *conscious* of any bias or political agenda, they are neutral and objective, when in fact they are only unconscious.'" (Lather, 1991, pg. 106 quoting Namenwirth)

So I began to fashion a section in my thesis in which I would explain myself. I fancied a subtitle that would discuss the pervading racism in which I have been raised and that I bring to this question of Native education. But soon a section would not suffice and I recognized that this entire body of text is embedded with my perspective, albeit at times fragmented, shifting, partial and multiple.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Reading two other theses at this time helped me to see the potential of a work where the self pervades and yet the data is rich.

The first was a thesis written at this

Said continues:

> "The only available English translation inexplicably leaves Gramsci's comment at that, whereas in fact Gramsci's Italian text concludes by adding 'therefore it is imperative at the outset to compile such an inventory.'" (Ibid, pg. 25)

At least to explain myself to the extent that I know where I am at this time and place.

university by a Native educator. I found the subject of wîya's dissertation enlightening and may discuss it later; right now it is the methodology that concerns me. Wîya wrote very personally of wîya's experiences as a Native child being educated/schooled and a Native educator educating/learning. It was a personal testimony of wîya's understanding of a Native world view. I found myself reading it differently, encouraged by wîya's words addressing the reader:

> "You need to see me at my table in relationship with a pine tree which stands outside my window [wîya has just spoken of wîya's interrelation to this pine tree]. I say you need to do this because I am going to share some of my thoughts and experiences in Native education, and if I am willing to do that, then you must be willing to listen and hear more than my words. You must also not treat my words as if they are separate from my whole being or from your being if you read this. I am prepared to share a part of my being with you, and much of this process is painful to me. I ask you therefore to be prepared to make space for me beside you. If you do not do this, then you will not hear or understand any part of what I will say. When you and I conjoin as writer and reader, the domain which we create and in which we operated as a couple will either expand both of us as mind and consciousness, or it will negate both of us." (Weber-Pillwax, 1992, pg. 2)

I believe wîya speaks of a type of listening and accompanying that I have begun learning through my involvement in talking circles. Without cross-talk, analysis or even the opportunity to

I was walking with a colleague to a presentation of a Native who recently completed wîya's masters degree from this university. I asked her if she had read wîya's thesis as she shared interest in Native issues with me. She said she had heard about it but not read it. My response was that it was an 'easy read.' Her hesitant reaction to my comment left me wondering if she thought I felt it was a not-very-academic work. She recovered the situation by suggesting that it might be easy to read because it is so very interesting.

Later, reflecting on my comments, I recognized that I found it easy to read because I read it differently than I read much of the other academic work. It is a unique text in that it contains a text given to it's author by an elder which is then translated to English. The author speaks about how to approach the text:

> "The Elder told me many other stories that were profound in the way he used metaphor to tell them. When I thought about the meaning of those stories ... I knew that part of the mental and emotional work involved in understanding the complex systems of metaphor meant that I had to cut mentally across the barriers of time. The way that the Elder told the stories was a way of giving me information that would become knowledge if I thought about the stories in the right way. The stories were structured in such a way that each story's meaning got more and more complex and rich as I thought about it. The Elder knew that I was not ready to understand the deeper systems of meaning and could not take it all in at once, so he constructed the story so that its meaning would

respond, listeners learn to hear anew, hear with the whole being, cast aside the ever-present critic predominant in academic discourse.

The second work was a published thesis by Brookes (1992). Wîya's work does not reflect "conventional scientific practice" (Lecompte, 1993, pg. 16) rather wîya's approaches are refreshingly novel. This project grew out of a recognition of the artificiality of wîya's data collection method. When wîya focused on writing about battered women, wîya expected them to share their stories with wîya while wîya remained silent about wîya's own secret--sexual abuse as a child. Wîya's thesis is written from wîya's experiences: as a child growing up, as a student loving books yet hating school, as a graduate student dealing with authority, as a university professor teaching students, etc. Wîya writes in letter format to wîya's thesis committee, explaining that this more personal approach expands wîya's contemplation and suggests a dialogue. Wîya also re-examines essays wîya has written to chart wîya's process and to read wîya's own assumptions and their developments and transformations.

Wîya is clear about wîya's assumptions, namely that the stories that wîya writes are not just any form of truth, rather they are a 'kind' of truth. Wîya recognizes the ideological perspective that wîya is presenting and suggests that this applies to all theoretical texts. Wîya's main theme is how knowledge is socially constructed. Wîya sees wîya's thesis writing as an examination of the construction of wîya's identity, in particular as a survivor of incest, in order to access the less obvious fabric of wîya's ideologies.

> continue to unfold." (Lightening, 1992, p. 15)

I read it to listen, to hear, to truly understand the material rather than to contest or critique it. It was easier because it was refreshingly different allowing me an openness towards the subject although I'm far from having developed great skill in this type of reading. I remembered when I first read the text how I wished I could read it again in the summer sitting under a tree with time to truly ponder.

Someone reminded me that all texts are revealed through time, we process them continuously, engaging in them in differing ways and drawing out differing meanings.

Wîya returned to the literature to, in wîya's own words, "[look] for theoretical justification for my decision to write autobiographically. I wanted a scholar to demonstrate that autobiography was a legitimate way of doing academic research." (Ibid, pg. 44)

Brookes speaks of the empowerment and inspiration wîya received in producing an 'unusual work' and how "non-creative academic writing projects ... work to reproduce illusions" (Ibid, pg. 5). Wîya's work suggests that academics ought to reconsider their practices in light of how they maintain power and authority relations.

The eloquence of wîya's work I found inspirational, it's meaning profound. Wîya admits an initial hesitation because wîya did not "consider my experiences to be significant, certainly not with respect to my academic work" (Ibid, pg. 13). Wîya recognizes that wîya's experiences are not universal but nevertheless believes that they hold some keys to greater understanding, or as wîya puts it, are a 'kind of truth'.

This is exemplified in a story told by Clifford in wîya's critique of positivism in ethnography:

> "Ethnographers are more and more like the Cree hunter who (the story goes) came to Montreal to testify in court concerning the fate of his hunting lands in the new James Bay hydroelectric scheme. He would describe his way of life. But when administered the oath he hesitated: 'I'm not sure I can tell the truth ... I can only tell what I know.'" (1986, pg. 8)

Drawing on the data of their own lives, Brookes and Weber-Pillwax

I am sharing with Brookes the belief that others will identity, at least in part, with the experiences I am portraying to them here. But further to this identification, I am hoping to create change in my reader(s) towards what I perceive to be a more 'enlightened' approach to interacting with 'Others'. This is but another mythical big story or metanarrative. My approach is not abstract logic rather personal relating. Nevertheless, my desired outcome is change in you, change that would bring you closer to where I am. In this way, I am guilty of what I am critiquing. I do not know how to resolve this paradox.

showed me the power of this form, its significance, its alluring simplicity and complex diversity, it's power to illustrate and vivify rather than explain and justify.

I will therefore use autobiography to vivify the topic of discussion before me. The next two chapters will describe the construction and subsequent destruction/reconstruction of the notion of 'Native' in me. The first chronicles my development through childhood into adulthood, my initiation into the myths of the dominant society, how I dealt with experiences that contradicted those myths, etc. The second talks of the mâmawonanâtawihow'kamik's influences on my development in this area. I will provide anecdotes and describe incidents as I remember them to frame the discussion.

I will write what I find useful or meaningful. The data or facts are "events to which [I] have given meaning" (Hutcheon, 1989, pg. 57).

Validity and other research concerns

By rejecting objectivity, conventional scientific concerns with validity and reliability disappear. Nevertheless, related concerns must be addressed.

Brookes (1992) talks of how wîya remembers wîyaself as silent as a child while wîya's parents remember wîya as talkative. The issue for wîya is not which is correct--which reveals a knowable, transparent truth about the past--rather wîya claims both memories are important because they each contain 'a' truth.

Asking whether data is trustworthy becomes more of an issue as to its credibility. Lather (1991) suggests four

> "Indeed, a good case can be made for viewing narrative understanding as the most adequate approach to the human domain. To understand ourselves we must grasp our own implicit history, for to be human is not simply to have a history (in a certain sense animals have this), but to be cognizant of this history." (Kerby, 1991, pg 87)

> "It is inadvisable to grant the narrative genre an absolute privilege over other genres of discourse in the analysis of human, and specifically linguistic (ideological), phenomena" (Lyotard, 1992, pg. 23)

This does not dismiss my use of personal experiences, anecdotes, etc. from other chapters in this work. I find I frequently use experiences as a measuring stick or a test of theory to judge its usefulness. That will continue through the text not unlike the use of journaling my research process has brought up theoretical issues in this chapter.

hooks talks about this same issue in wîya's essay on writing autobiographically. Wîya's reflections: "[a]s I wrote, I felt that I was not as concerned with accuracy of detail as I was with evoking in writing the state of mind, the spirit of a particular moment" (1989, pg. 158). I have not even tried to verify my memories (particularly childhood memories because of their temporal distance) with those who were also present at the time (siblings, parents, methods. The first is triangulation or the use of multiple data sources to arrive at an issue from several different directions. I will be doing this through the use of both autobiographical representation and textual analysis.

The second is construct validity which she suggests comes from a "*systematized reflexivity* which reveals how a priori theory has been changed by the logic of the data" (Ibid, pg. 67). The second column of this text is a form of self-reflexivity although construct validity will also be engaged in the text of the first column as well.

The third is face validity in which data and analyses are returned to respondents, a step beyond the traditional member check which only involves returning the data. I see this text operationalizing face validity by its form. I, a graduate student, am the data, at least the autobiographical portion and representationally, the academic text also. This text will be available to other graduate students or others 'like' me who can take these results and refine them through their own reading of this text. This process takes place every time I talk about my work with a colleague (some of these conversations are presented here) and continues less interactively once the text is set and bound.

And lastly Lather speaks about *catalytic validity* or the degree to which participants change. Again, that depends upon the readership for I see myself as a part of them and together we are the subjects of this research. I know I have and am changing.

friends and relatives). I am more interested in the spirit of what I have remembered than the verifiable accuracy.

> "Psychologically, narrative is aimed not at achieving a mirror image of one's history but at generating a plausible account of the details of that history and allowing one to have an understanding of oneself that facilitates the overcoming of psychic blockages and allows one to function satisfactorily in the present." (Kerby, 1991, pg 91)

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Writing within an academic environment, I am keenly aware of the purpose of thesis writing. Research is ostensibly aimed at furthering knowledge and a thesis should contribute to this goal. But beyond that, it is an exercise a graduate student engages in to exhibit their academic prowess. Just as Brookes (1992) engaged in deconstructing wîya's previous essays and Weber-Pillwax (1992) reviewed literature on Native education, I recognized that I would have to do something more than autobiography for this work to be considered academically appropriate. I followed their examples and began exploring the notion of textual analysis.

Said's work on Orientalism was drawn to my attention. Wîya examines the creation of the notion of 'Orient' as social construction rooted in a discourse of a time, place and people. The introduction to wîya's work could almost as easily have replaced Orientalism with 'Indianism' as the quote below illustrates:

> "My contention is that without examining Orientalism [Indianism] as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage--and even produce--the Orient [Native] politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period." (Said, 1979, pg. 3)

Francis's book, of which I spoke earlier, traces the creation of the concept of 'Indian' through Canadian history. Wîya writes about the purpose of wîya's work:

> "The 'truth' of the image is not really what concerns me. I am not setting out to expose fraudulent images by comparing them to a 'real Indian.' It is, after all, the argument of this book that there is no such thing as a real Indian. ... my main intention is not to argue with the stereotypes, but to think about them. The last thing I want to do is to replace an outdated Imaginary Indian with my very own, equally misguided, version. My concern is rather to understand where the Imaginary Indian came from, how Indian imagery has affected public policy in Canada and how it has shaped, and continues to shape, the myths non-Natives tell themselves about being Canadian." (Francis, 1992, pg. 6)

I began to wonder about the creation of the 'Imaginary Indian' in academic literature on Native education. Urion's (1991) editorial in the "Canadian Journal of Native Education" spoke of Hedley's review of academic literature on Native education in North America. The latter finds that the underlying framework of acculturation pervades this literature. I believe that it is not only our limited knowledge that continues this form of thinking, it is embedded in our way of coming to knowledge. Reflexive deconstruction might provide some 'truth' on this topic.

In efforts to delimit the work I am about to engage in, I decided to focus on the academic literature of Native education generated in English-speaking Canada. My first thought was to examine the Canadian Journal of Native Education because of my familiarity with it and because I saw it as

How do you justify a research decision that is a gut feeling?

representational of this literature. Unfortunately, critical examination of nineteen volumes and close to three hundred articles seemed a daunting task.

I turned my attention elsewhere and discovered a 1987 reader on Indian Education in Canada: The Challenge edited by Barman, Hébert, and McCaskill, of the University of British Columbia. This book had been brought to my attention in various courses in the area so I knew from experience that it was circulating in academia. A quick note to the publishers ascertained that 3491 copies had been distributed. Compared to the subscription number of approximately 600 for the Canadian Journal of Native Education, I felt this was a reasonably well circulated document. The variety of articles and authors further encouraged my choice.

At the time when I was considering how to proceed in my analysis, a colleague made a class presentation looking at an example of discourse analysis presented in Parker entitled Discourse dynamics: Critical analysis for social and individual psychology. Wîya gave us a variety of "texts" from the goal statement of an organization to a advertisement to a photograph and provided us with the tools of analysis presented in Parker. The criteria helped us to see the "texts" as discourse containing objects and subjects making meaning by alluding to other discourses and historical contexts and by speaking in certain manners. The political implications could also be assessed by examining how discourses support certain institutions, how they reproduce power relations and their ideological effects. I was pleased at discovering this tool to help me approach a text since my previous exposure to deconstruction had involved vague notions of examining that which is hidden or left unsaid. I will speak more about Parker's work in chapter 5 where I will endeavour to apply wîya's model to an examination of the Indian Education in Canada text.

I am not a neutral analyzer, I know what I am looking for. Basically, I am looking for material that will support a constructed notion of 'Native.' This returns back to my research question, I am trying to describe what the mâmawonanâtawihow'kamik has taught me about 'Native' as a category and what it has taught me about labelling.

After the textual analysis, I would like to turn to a literature that is working with these concepts to conclude my discussion. Trinh Minh-ha reminds us that "writing constantly refers to writing, and no writing can ever claim to be 'free' of other writings" (1989, pg. 21). What I am reading falls broadly into the category of feminist poststructuralism written by the 'Others.' Authors include Mohanty, Anzaldua, hooks, Chow, Trinh Minh-ha.

I will use this literature as a tool of reflection, claiming it as a spring-board for the discussion rather than an authority on the topics. Although I will not deliberately misrepresent what I have read, I will not fully represent it. I will only draw on what I find useful for my purposes here.

One thing that I will not address is the political implications of the social construction of 'Native' in the academic education literature. I leave that for later work for it is a significant topic.

But as Trinh Minh-ha expresses, I need to be explicit about the influences of writings on what I am writing. I often feel that my reading in this area has given me the vocabulary to express what I have come to know in other ways. But that is too simple, for I am sure that the language itself has also shaped how I think about things like identity. How often I feel that language is such an imperfect vehicle of expression!

SELF-REFLEXIVITY

Throughout my academic career, I have written so much with a single message in a mode described as argumentative rationality (Lather, 1991, pg. 150), with a point well made, an argument well presented. I recognize how my education has encouraged me to focus on a delimited subject rather than explore plurality, to refine my arguments rather than to accept both the logical and illogical or irrational others (Ellsworth, 1992).

Brookes reviews the literature on writing autobiographically as a research methodology. Wîya suggests that after a narrative is written, it be carefully examined for the "apparent and not so apparent interests, biases, and assumptions used to organize the stories" (1992, pg. 44). Wîya further writes that "learning to critique through autobiographical reflection and analysis is one means by which researchers, teachers and students can begin to know and examine the biases and assumptions which organize different ways of working." (Ibid, pg. 3)

Recognizing my social constructedness and how this affected my text was helpful, how I would operationalize this knowledge to make it explicit was quite another problem. Lather has struggled with this same issue.

> "To attempt to deconstruct one's own work is to risk buying into what Bowers (1984) points out as the extraordinary faith in the powers of critical reflection that places emancipatory efforts in such a contradictory position with the postmodern foregrounding of the limits of consciousness. Johnson,

hooks (1989) describes wîya's choice of not using footnotes in wîya's writing to prevent it from being perceived exclusively as 'intellectual'. Wîya was criticized for this by wîya's colleagues. Wîya's rebuke was that wîya had asked reading people from wîya's black background whether they read things with footnotes and found that they generally dismissed this type of work as overly intellectual.

I know when I began writing this, I desperately wanted to write for my intelligent yet not 'intellectual' friends. Unfortunately, I am always aware of the purpose of this writing, to demonstrate my intellectual ability to a panel who will examine me on it, to prove my 'mastery' of this form. My use of citations is one example of this intellectualizing of my work. One other is what I am describing here as 'self-reflexivity', the use of the two column technique to interrupt my own work.

> too, draws attention to the inadequacies of immediacy, of belief in the self-presentation of meaning which 'seems to guarantee the notions that in the spoken word we know what we mean, mean what we say, say what we mean, and know what we have said'" (Lather, 1991, pg. 83).

But wîya does not take refuge in the futility of self-criticism; wîya recognizes the problems and proceeds nonetheless. Wîya speaks of "'postmodern writing strategies,' such as 'multivoicedness' and the texts which interrupt themselves and foreground their own constructedness" (Ibid, pg. 124). One strategy wîya uses is to reflect back upon wîya's assumptions in wîya's work. Another is to cite heavily, foregrounding the multitude of voices interrupting themselves and displacing wîya's authority as author.

LeCompte's (1993) introduction to a monograph on narrative also reflects on displacing a unified authorial vision. Wîya review's Bateson's ideas of binocular vision or double description. The notion is a simple one. It is in using two eyes, approaching the object of our vision from two points, that gives us our capacity for depth perception.

I have chosen to write in two columns. In this way, I am juxtaposing the text with an initial reflection upon it. The first text can be read as a body in its entirety. The second exists only in relation to the first, as reflection upon the first. It represents a multitude of responses to the first text, not a single voice, a reflection back upon the text. At times, the second points at the construction of the first, at times, it pushes the first to see itself differently, at times it just provides a place for

How can I say 'an' when indeed I mean many, m'an'y, my an.

Little did I know when I made this decision what a technological nightmare it would be. It seems that computer programs are linear in their thinking. Though columns are available to me, they want to push things from the left to the right as more is added instead of some extra thoughts that didn't fit elsewhere.

I do this to suggest there are many ways of reading this text. "The more ears I am able to hear with, the farther I see the plurality of meaning and the less I lend myself to the illusion of a single message" (Trinh-Minh-ha, 1989, pg. 30). My initial reflections are but a first, tentative, self-authored contemplation. I rely somewhat upon reactions from the readers of this draft to formulate my own responses. I admit to my inexperience in this mode of self-critique and recognize that these are halting but nevertheless significant efforts. They are there to encourage the reader to continue the process.

HOPES

When Said says that "Orientalism is--and does not simply represent--a considerable dimension of modern political-intellectual culture, and as such has less to do with the Orient than it does with 'our' world" (1979, pg. 12), I feel assured that this reflective process on the category 'Native' will be fruitful for me as a 'non-Native' for it is the 'non-Native' that has predominated the construction of this label.

I hope that this work will be seen as contributing to a process of "putting to work my skills and privileges in the service of contributing to the making of a space from the unvoiced/unheeded can be said/heard" (Lather, 1991, pg. 124). I am interested in contributing to an "'unlearning' of 'the inherent dominative mode.'" (Said quoting Williams, 1979, pg. 28). I would like to join the voices that "Challenge canons, ... expose systems of power which authorize some representations while allowing me to keep the ideas completely seperate. Instead, I have had to write in two documents, merging them together as a final step.

Just as words speak, so do blank spaces.

FEARS

When I facilitate workshops, after the introductory remarks, I often encourage participants to examine their hopes and fears. My hopes are related to the purpose of this project, the direction it is taking, its desired accomplishments. The fears are about the barriers or blocks to this.

As Brookes (1992), I too fear that I will not be taken seriously or that I will be judged and condemned for writing autobiographically. Confessional approaches such as ours are refreshingly innovative and an appropriate response in this postpositivist era.

Nevertheless, I know the difference for myself in listening to people who are just talking versus listening to people who are saying something. The difference just as often resides in me, the listener, as in the speaker but I nonetheless fear that my readers will blocking others" (Lather, 1991, pg. 33)

I see my work as part of a shifting of the role from being a spokesperson for the silent other to acting on the barriers that prevent people from speaking for themselves or prevent people from listening to those who might speak.

condemn me for speaking purposelessly.

I fear that my innovative approach will be seen as fancy technique without substance, or worse, implicated in a more subtle form of 'power-over' described here by Lather:

> "In this endeavour to 'do science otherwise,' it behooves us, I believe, to be cautious regarding how the new openness to interpretive ways of knowing might well be premised on their being a more 'with it' version of the intrusive surveillance and examination that undergirds the increasingly invasive apparatuses of power of multinational 'hypercapitalism.' Additionally, we need to be cautious that our praxis-oriented work not be a pressured and coercive part of the 'technologies of normalization.'" (1991, pg. 101)

Just as Brookes (1992) recognized the dichotomy of how generalized writing about battered women missed the reality of their individual lives, so Said speaks of trying to find the balance between "too dogmatic a generality and too positivistic a localized focus" (1979, pg. 8). Wîya asks, "How then to recognize individuality and to reconcile it with its intelligent, and by no means passive or merely dictatorial, general and hegemonic context?" (Ibid, pg. 9). I am faced with this same question. I have chosen to talk specifically about my experiences, about a microcosm of social interactions. The literature review and textual analysis opens up the microscope somewhat. Nevertheless, I believe that what I present here has broad and universal implications and I hope it will be seen as such.

I am concerned that I will become dogmatic about my point, somehow rigidly taking a position against rigidity. This fear of rigidity takes on three different forms: ideological, moral and pragmatic. "'Can an approach that is based on the critique of ideology itself become ideological? The answer is that of course it can ... What can save critical theory from being used in this way is the insistence on reflectivity.'" (Lather, 1991, quoting Bredo and Feinberg, pg. 790). Or I fear moralizing, suggesting one viewpoint to be the moral imperative. Francis said that "[t]he last thing I want to do is to replace an outdated Imaginary Indian with my very own, equally misguided, version" (1992, pg. 6). My goal here is not to say that this is the way it is, rather it is to open up thinking, seeing other possibilities without presenting one as correct. The directedness of this project is in its strong suggestion that our current approaches are wanting.

CHAPTER 3

CONSTRUCTING 'NATIVE' IN ME

INTRODUCTION

I have noticed a tendency for literature on Natives to focus on narrative, on recounting stories. Books like Shorten's Without reserve: Stories from urban Natives or Meili's Those who know: Profiles of Alberta's Native Elders or Perrault and Vance's Writing the circle: Native women of Western Canada all use stories, allowing Native people to speak with their own voices. This fits into the image of Native culture being contained within the oral, narrative tradition, which simultaneously implies a rejection of objectification of personal experiences.

The voice of dominant society has more often been one of 'speaking about the other.' This is epitomized in the work of ethnologist Jenness in Indians of Canada.

I am choosing not to speak *about the other* rather to speak about myself, telling my story concerning Natives as a non-Native. I see my story as typical in some ways, particularly in the ways that social categories (in this case Native) are constructed. How these processes are cloaked and contained within our subconscious is not my primary concern. I leave this work to those studying psychology in more depth. How I became aware of some of these illusions also requires another form of study (although the interlude is suggestive of this). For now, all I want to do is point them out, look at them and my newfound recognition of their construction. I will then analyze my story to draw out certain themes, themes which I believe can be

It is with trepidation that I begin this chapter for so much has already been said, I fear nothing more remains. I wonder if more is in me to bring these ideas, so far only alluded to and hinted at, to fruition.

"Remember, the *minor*-ity's voice is always personal; that of the *major*-ity, always impersonal. Logic dictates. Man *thinks*, woman *feels*." (Trinh Minh-ha, 1989, pg. 28)

Somewhere near the beginning of writing this chapter, my mother died. My engagement in this work changed as I began mourning. What had been a stimulating intellectual endeavour became a detached process; like something I had agreed to do that had lost its importance given the intervening events.

generalized. In this effort, I will draw on the literature.

GROWING UP 'WHITE'

It is etched in my memory, the day the moving van appeared backed up to the house across the street. We were driving to church when I noticed it and I am sure my mother encouraged me to go over there to see if there would be any children my age to play with. I had three older brothers who chummed together so I was often left companionless. The prospect of new friends was an exciting one. After lunch, at my first moment of freedom, I raced over to their back door and knocked. An older boy, Joe, answered my question of "Are there any girls my age here?" by yelling, at the top of his lungs, "Kiesha, it's for you". Thus began my inseparable friendship with Kiesha at age 4.

I am not sure when I became aware that Kiesha was Native. On the other hand, I do not remember a time when I did not know that her mother, Mary, was. The notion that this trait would be inherited evaded my childhood logic.

What I did know was that Kiesha and I floated contentedly between the two households whose differences added delight to our ardent efforts at play. At my house we experienced structure and a continual effort on my mother's part to teach us. We learned to bake cookies by watching my mother and licking the bowl; we learned to sew clothes for our dolls (I remember my jealousy of my mother's praise for Kiesha's patience with the sewing machine whereas I had a lead foot on the pedal); we learned about gardening through our assigned duties of weeding

If I were Native writing about my experiences "Growing Up Native", how would this section read differently? I wonder not only at the difference in content, but also the differences in perception by the reader, both Native and non-Native alike.

I have changed the names of people and any specific references to place in order to protect the identity of my subjects. I have not asked the permission of those to whom I am referring because, in many cases, we have lost touch. Besides, I don't believe that these descriptions are about them as much as they are about me. I do, nevertheless, write as if they might read my text and see my perceptions of them, in this way maintaining a sense of personal ethic.

Those close to me may recognize the people described herein. I ask you to keep in mind that you are not reading an accurate portrayal of these other people, you are reading about my perceptions.

It's funny that Mary was always Mary to me, whereas my other friend's mothers were Mrs. Tomkins or Mrs. Trapperski.

and picking peas; and we learned much more. Then we crossed the street and practised what we had learned. We mixed up concoctions that we called cookies, we cut and sewed up remnants that were clothes only in our imagination, and we took the sugar bowl in which to dip the rhubarb from my mother's garden which we clandestinely nibbled (it was Kiesha's favourite but I never developed a taste for it, I just ate the sugar).

We lived at the edge of town, my house bordering on a ravine and parkland. One of our favourite pastimes was to descend into the ravine and re-route the water emerging from a spring and trickling between the roots of the grandfather pines. My parents had a small playhouse constructed in the backyard where Kiesha and I spent countless hours in imaginary worlds among the trees, birds and squirrels. I was 'in nature' no more or less than Kiesha and in no visibly different ways.

My parents were of the Dr. Spock generation, both structure and consistency being the norms upon which I was raised. At exactly 3:00 p.m., it was snack time and we were proportioned one serving of fruit and two cookies. At Kiesha's house there was the bread drawer and whenever we were hungry, we made sandwiches. On a hot day at my house, if the thermostat reached 80 degrees fahrenheit, we were allowed home-made popsicles. If Kiesha had money, she was allowed to cross the highway and purchase treats, both of which were forbidden to me. I remember standing on my bed after bedtime, looking out the window to the still bright day at 8:01 p.m. daylight savings time and watching Kiesha and her siblings playing. They had no set bedtime. I remember, for the most part,

I have deliberately chosen to speak about personal relationships and interactions in my review of the social construction of 'Native' in me. I could just as easily have analyzed the story and text books that I used or the influence of television and other media on my formation. I believe both of these influences have or are being analyzed within abstract (in contrast to my chosen personal) approaches. I refer you to an article by Decore, Carney and Urion (1982) concerning the depiction of Native people in Alberta school books as an example.

My mother is not the ogre she may appear here, given a presentist perspective. She was very much a product of her times and the thinking contained therein, possibly more successful than her peers. Her social commitment was strong, working originally on things like knitting for the church bazaar and later chairing the school board. As I sit beside her dying body in the local hospital, strangers have approached me to sing praises concerning her contributions to the community.

understanding the few rules we had at Kiesha's house because they concerned safety and consideration. We were not allowed to bake our cookie creations because ovens were dangerous; we learned to clean up after sandwich construction because if we didn't, likely Kiesha's older siblings, Laurel and Joe, would have to and they reminded us of this.

The longest days of summer were when the Calgary Stampede was on because Kiesha's family would be gone, off to "Indian Days". When I quizzed Kiesha about these trips, she spoke of sleeping in teepees and other exotic excitements. *I* knew it mostly as a time apart.

And then came grade one, the end of summer. I never did understand why my best friend Kiesha had to go to a different school than I, her being Catholic and my being sent to the public school. Somewhere in the succeeding years, I realized that she was also Native and I somehow knew that Natives went to the Catholic school, not believing there were any in the public school I attended. I recently pulled out some elementary school pictures to find some clearly brown faces gazing back at me which I had not remembered as being there; they had been invisible. They had definitely not been close associates of mine within the classroom, as the faces I remember most belonged to those, usually girls, whose parents knew my parents and who attended the same church as our family. It is in looking at the dark faces in these faded pictures that I get a vague sense of having been cruel, as children are, in our teasing of those who were different. A clear incident evades my memory because these sessions do not feel like they were one of those

As I trim this picture to cut off references to the town, the school and the grade, I also cut off the visible run in her lyotards, whoever she was.

I also noticed, in my neatly kept childhood photo albums, the absence of any photos of Kiesha. Most of the pictures involved family outings: myself, my brothers, my mother and, implied behind the shutter, my father. The camera missed my daily life and my intimate friendships.

significant events in my development yet a vague guilt remains etched in my memory.

As I mentioned earlier, Mary was the first Indian whom I consciously understood to be one. It was concerning Mary that I learned about Indians, not Kiesha for she was transparent to me, a friend, too much like me to possibly be one of those, an 'Other'. Mary was quiet in contrast to her rambunctious, playful French husband. She worked part-time and so was home less than my own mother at a time when stay-at-home mothers were the norm. She left the older Laurel and Joe in charge. A story that was often repeated by my own mother concerning what she saw as Mary's inadequate maternal instinct is symbolic of how I began to see those labelled Indian as lacking in something important. Mary was driving off to work when her diapered son Tony protested his mother's departure. He chased her car all the way down the street with such determination that Laurel couldn't catch him. With this story, so often repeated, I learned that Mary was seen as a inferior mother.

Laurel committed the unpardonable sin of a teenage pregnancy. She had been a 'wild one', I was told as I was reminded not to follow her example. 'There had not been enough supervision in the home.' Again, Mary's failings were attributed as the cause of this disgrace. I understood that somehow her Indianness was to blame.

One of my mother's charitable projects was called "Mother's Day Out" where mother's of lower socio-economic status were invited to attend a weekly meeting, child care provided, to learn about the science of home-

Stay-at-home mothers were the perceptual norm, I am not sure they really were the norm throughout society but in my sheltered, middle-class environment, they appeared to be the most common variety of nuclear family composition.

"If it [connection with others] appears under the self-satisfying guise of charity or any other right-thinking humanism, he [the foreigner] accepts it of course, but in a hard-hearted, unbelieving, indifferent manner. The foreigner longs for affiliation, the better to experience, through a refusal, its untouchability." (Kristeva, 1991, pg. 12) making including wise shopping, nutrition, budgeting, disciplining children, etc. Most of the women who attended were Native (how I know that, I do not know). The message was clear, these women were lacking in something that women like my mother could provide. It was clearly a uni-directional exchange, based on charity and goodwill. The thinking was, I believe, typical of the 1960s and 70s with it's 'war on poverty'.

The other lesson concerning Indians that remains etched in my mind was that they were to be feared when in groups. Kiesha's aunties frequently came to visit in what we jokingly referred to as 'Indian cars' because they were old beasts that rode low on their shocks from which emerged countless women and children. Kiesha's aunties were Indians too, just like her mother, and I was forbidden to visit Kiesha when they were about, the foreboding in my mother's restriction provoking fear. I was never clear what I was to fear and I do not ever recall seeing anyone intoxicated.

In my teenage years, my family, but primarily my mother, decided to take in foster children. She felt we had a good family life that we should share with others in need, those lacking. She was particularly concerned with teenagers, as she did not have the time, given her volunteer activities, to baby sit smaller children. There were three foster children that stayed with us for the longer term while I was at home, most around my age. Two were clearly Native, the third of unknown heritage. Again, the attitude I remember having was that they lacked something that we, as a middle-class, white family, had and were willing to share with these poor unfortunates, for they were victims

It is funny how this reference to alcohol appears so easily when referring to Native people. Nevertheless, when I was recently comparing notes with a contemporary of these events, he remembered his mother attending some wild parties in that house across the street.

Yet I also remember being jealous of the attention these additional siblings received and the double standards in their favour.

of their background. It was not surprising for me to learn, years later, that my one foster brother with whom I am still close today, used to emerge from the auntie's 'Indian car' in bygone years as his biological mother was a friend of Mary's. His mother had also attended 'Mother's Day Out'. He was one of 'them'.

When he first came to live with us, I remember he was incredibly quiet, never speaking during our loud and busy family meals and only really speaking when spoken to, answering in short, monosyllabic replies. He fit the quiet, observing, stoic Indian stereotype very well. In later years when we became good friends, I saw his out-going and generous sides, his artistic creativity, his intellectual acumen.

There is a rail road track that separates my home town. The dividing line provides a border more tangible than a fence would be. I grew up on the more prosperous side: the houses were new, the families were nuclear. Though the town was small (under 5000 inhabitants), I really knew only those living on my side though I knew *about* the others. When I began babysitting, I was called by parents from the *other side*. I remember one night when the parents told me there was no bedtime in earshot of the kids. I was left with no authority meaning we were all still awake at 4:00 a.m. when the parents returned. It was strangely reminiscent of watching Kiesha and her siblings playing out the sun left in the evenings of daylight savings time only this time I was filled with judgement. My mother restricted my babysitting *over there* after this incident.

Our family has a cottage on a remote lake in the north. Every summer, we

> "When I turned forty a few years ago, I gave myself the present of rereading the personal journals I have been keeping since age eleven. I was astounded at the chasm between my present conception of my own past, which is being continually revised and updated to suit present circumstances, and the actual past events, behavior and emotions I recorded as faithfully as I could as they happened. My derelictions, mistakes and failures of responsibility are much more evident in those journals than they are in my present, sanitized and virtually blameless image of my past behaviour. It was quite a shock to encounter in those pages the person I actually have been rather than the person I now conceive myself to have been. My memory is always under the control of the person I now want and strive to be, and so rarely under the control of the facts. If the personal facts of one's past are this difficult for other people to face, then perhaps it is no wonder that we must cast about outside ourselves for someone to feel superior to, even though there are so many blunders and misdeeds in our own personal histories that might serve that function." (Piper, 1994, pg. 235)

Needless to say, I am writing this from a presentist perspective.

vacationed there along the beach in almost utter isolation. Across the river mouth stands an Indian cabin--a small, one room shack with a bed, a cook stove, a table and chairs. This was near one of our blueberry patches so sometimes, when we crossed the water, we would see signs of inhabitation: fresh horse droppings, smoke from a fire or a new arbour and fish drying set-up. The Indian who occasionally resided there was a ghost-like figure in my mind, his presence only hinted at, never fully perceived.

I had the privilege of attending boarding school in Europe for one of my teen years. I remember being quizzed by the curious girls about Indians, in particular the boys' romantic attractiveness as this was our main preoccupation at that age. I have retained my reply in my memory as a curiosity for it's seemingly strange view but I now see that it contains a truth from my belief system of the time. I had replied that the boys were indeed attractive but only when they washed their hair. I believe this was part of the 'dirty Indian' stereotype propagated.

Kiesha and I drifted apart as friendships and activities revolved more around school chums than around neighbourhoods. When she reappeared in the public school for grades 10 to 12, the Catholic school not yet having attained sufficient numbers to provide these final, formative years, we were living worlds apart in the social categories that stratified our friendships during our teens. Eventually her family moved to the country.

My next best friend in my teenage years was the granddaughter of a Métis leader but that was my only conscious recognition of her Nativeness as her

I later learned that on the other end of this large, islanded lake is an Indian reserve. My parents tell stories and have photographic evidence of visits to uninhabited berry picking and fish drying camps along the far shores. I have no recollections of this sort at all.

Beside this cabin stands the frame of a small log house. This past summer I noticed two canoes on the nearby shore. I once saw several people fishing off the shore in the evening glow, laughter echoing across the mirror-still water.

I do recall my own stringy, greasy hair at the age before teenage beautification rituals. Maybe I was speaking more of myself than anyone else with this comment.

family was integrated into the middle-class, white, nuclear family environment of the day. Besides, I had famous ancestors as well and saw hers no different from my own. She and I continued to pursue our love of the outdoors as we ventured past the parkland into the bush, followed the creek and built our imaginary worlds of mermaids and peaceful nests. We saw deer, bear and muskrats; we knew the mossy beds that carpeted evergreen forest floors and the thorny wild rose hedges that guarded deciduous stands; we followed springs and creeks from their sources to their destinations; we returned home with countless treasures and dirty feet.

Again, the theme of inappropriate mothering reared its head, but in my rebellious teens, I rejected all my own family stood for and ended up as practically part of the family down the street at my friend's place. She was an older sibling and we were often left in charge of the younger ones, when we were not trying to run away from them to pursue our own interests.

I have one memory of being on an Indian reserve, though at the time it was only a half-consciousness. I played clarinet in the high school band and overnight trips to play in distant towns were a highlight. I remember that the band teacher, who was also my language arts teacher, had a strong sense of social conscience. He continually encouraged us to retire our adolescent pretences and extend consideration to those we tended to shun. So it was not surprising that on one of our band excursions, our return trip was marked by a few stops in poorer small town elementary schools to entertain. One school was filled with brown faces. I remember being surprised for this village was just off the highway that I believed I knew well, having travelled it often and considering the area part of my own. How could it be that so many Indians lived here and nobody had ever told me?

It was at my high school graduation party when it finally dawned on me that the barriers in the town, symbolized by the rail road tracks, were more concrete in my mind as a cage containing my thinking. It was a rare glimpse of lucidity, followed by a quick, rebellious exit from the town and my family and all they represented.

Years later, after living in a village in Africa among a different 'Other' and venturing through towns and cities around the world, I began to see my own home town as a microcosm, not an anomaly, of a complex world of people who have, people who do, people who are ... categories of people.

LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT INDIANS

Confession and memory work wherein we talk about what we know to be true in our lives, our stories, our versions of oppression is only a beginning. We must take these stories and move beyond them to see the larger picture. "To reaffirm the power of the personal while simultaneously not getting trapped in identity politics, we must work to link personal narratives with knowledge of how we must act politically to change and transform the world" (hooks, 1989, pg. 111).

I have spoken about my experiences and how the concept of Indian was constructed in me through personal relationships and interactions. So why do I tell these stories/truths? I believe

I have since returned to this reserve to attend pow-wows and such. Whenever I go there, I feel like I am again exposing a lie, the lie that it is not there, a lie that was so very entrenched in my being through my childhood.

I am not sure if it was irony or providence but this party was held at Kiesha's family's country residence.

My use of the word 'Indian' in this section is deliberate, for it speaks to a consciousness that pre-dates political correctness and more sophisticated references to 'these Other people'. But more than just reflecting a time period, I believe it reflects a consciousness period as well.

I hesitate to use a quote such as this because it so blatantly uses the term 'political'. I am having trouble with this word because of my past associations with it. Political to me was always oppositional, a few self-aware people against a mighty machinery of people, institutions, ideology, dominance. This is the legacy I have retained from my leftist heritage, a sense of my insignificance in the big frame, of seeing they contain much information about the myths of this time and place. These are myths in the sense of stories we come to know as people, come to believe, come to let shape our thinking and our actions. I see these stories less as a telling of 'the truth' than as a telling of 'my truth'. Nevertheless, in 'my truth' is contained some shared truths.

Pratt (1984) speaks of the varied responses wîya receives when wîya 'speaks up' on issues. One such response from others is, in wîya's words, "who do I think I am, to speak for them as white or gentile, their experience has been different." My experiences are, indeed, unique to me and not perfectly generalizable to the broader society. Some will recognize themselves in my stories, others won't be able to relate. Perfect generalizability is a myth sustained through our hopes for a perfect science that can explain our world. I can put this illusion to rest without dismissing the possibility of coming to know and to understand our world more through a quest for knowledge that takes different forms.

So I see my stories as a kind of raw data from which an analysis can be drawn and understandings flushed out. I now proceed with an analysis of the themes in my stories, themes that I have also seen confirmed in some of the literature that I will be discussing.

The Disappearing Indian

The current upswing in popular movies concerning Indian people reflects a consciousness that has continued to our time: The Indian is disappearing. A title like Last of the Mohicans speaks as eloquently as the images of the encroaching white man being as only tiny cracks for the potential use of my agency, a slow plodding towards change, towards the revolution. Now I see many places in which I can change social constructions, subvert norms, push at the status quo, question beliefs (my own and others). I have trouble calling this process political although I believe it is. That word remains too loaded for me at this time.

numerous as the stars in Dances with Wolves or the dying Indians found by the Black Robe when he finally reached the destined Huron village.

The myth of which I speak here is that an Indian existed but is now passing into extinction. This myth hinges on a conception of 'Indian' which I will discuss below as imaginary. Nevertheless, the theme of the disappearing Indian is pervasive. My shock at discovering an Indian reserve so close to my home is but one example of the manifestation of this illusion.

In tracing this theme, I found that it was not a contemporary phenomenon. Over 150 years ago, a judge spoke of it in this way:

> "'By a law of nature, they [Indians] seem destined to a slow, but sure extinction. Everywhere, at the approach of the white man, they fade away. We hear the rustling of their footsteps, like that of the withered leaves of autumn, and they are gone for ever. They pass mournfully by us, and they return no more'" (Story quoted in Sollors, 1986, pg. 116)

One hundred years ago the theme continued by a Canadian missionary: "The Indian tribes are passing away ... On the western plains, Native songs, wafted on the evening breezes, are the dying requiem of the departing savage." (Maclean quoted in Francis, 1992, pg. 23).

Francis presents some well documented instances where people perpetuated the image of the vanishing Indian. Wîya describes artists such as Paul Kane, Frederick Arthur Verner, Edmund Morris and Emily Carr and

There are times in this chapter when I am keenly aware of my patronizing language. I have difficulty finding a respectful, inclusive way of speaking about or point out these divisive, exclusive themes. I reflect again on the pronouns in the English language as compared to the Cree language. In English we speak of us, you and them. In Cree there are different words to speak of us (me and mine), of us (me and you and ours), of you (you and yours), of them (he or she and theirs) and of them (those beyond he or she i.e. his or her relatives). I wonder how this chapter would sound of I had access to these more refined nuances.

photographer Edward S. Curtis who's works were considered an attempt to record a race before it passed into extinction. They believed,

> "they were saving an entire people from extinction; not literally, of course, but in the sense that they were preserving on canvas, and later on film a record of a dying culture before it expired forever" (Ibid, pg. 23-4).

In the thinking of the time, photographer Curtis entitled his first piece, "The Vanishing Race." Sollers (1986) describes how the vanishing Indian motif was part of songs, poems, plays, paintings, and sculptures, often rhetorically connected with waterfalls, throughout the last century.

The representation of the disappearing Indian was reinforced in 1911 by the appearance of Ishi, the alleged last of the Yaki tribe in California. He worked with anthropologist Alfred Kroeber at the museum of the University of California to assist the latter in reconstructing the Yaki culture. His death, five years later, reinforced the image of the disappearing Indian (Francis, 1992).

Another book that carries this same theme is Kazimiroff's (1982) story of Joe Two Trees in The last Algonquin. This true story is written down by the grandson of a man, then a boy, who met a lone Indian near his country home in New York. The boy had been a companion to the old Indian in his last days as the latter recounted his loss of family, his attempts at contact with other people and the glorified contentment of his subsistence life of retirement from people. This story is told as a requiem for a passing peoples, the death knoll of a culture, a bitter sweet saga of the impossibility of living together; a tale of how one surrenders through withdrawal and death.

I did not fully realize the impact of the image of the disappearing Indian on the consciousness of our society until I visited a retired bureaucrat whose career in Native education spanned the middle of this century. He spoke of a discovery of the authorities-that-be in the 1930s or 1940s that there were a great deal more Indians living in the bush up north than they had suspected. "You see," he patronized me, "we all believed the Indians were dying out, slowly, ever since they signed treaty. Most were assimilating. Extinction was inevitable and the policy up to that point was to make it as painless as possible. It was considered regrettable but not preventable." (I quote the essence of what I remember he said). So the recognition of a great many more Indians than suspected living in the Canadian woodlands was quickly followed by attempts to hasten their integration/assimilation into the dominant society through education. The thrust began with new school authorities initiating this project in the north of the three prairie provinces.

My belief in the disappearing Indian carried the simplicity of childhood understandings. I knew that Mary was Native but I at first believed that Kiesha was not. It was as if their presence in our neighbourhood dissolved that 'Indianness' away.

One of the reasons for the disappearing Indian is given as his/her inability to adapt. Written in 1851:

> "'the Indian is hewn out of rock. You can rarely change the form

I am not sure I fully believe his story of ignorance as to the existence of people in the woodlands. Possibly naively, I believe that government keeps better records on these things. In particular, I know the records of treaty Indians are elaborate and enigmatic. My only way of understanding his point was that many of the Native inhabitants of the woodlands might have been non-treaty, the implications of which are sorely missing in the research I have read to date.

> without destruction of the substance. Races of inferior energy have possessed a power of expansion and assimilation to which he [sic] is a stranger; and it is this fixed and rigid quality which has proved his ruin. He will not learn the art of civilization, and he and his forest must perish together. The stern, unchanging features of his mind excite our admiration from their very immutability; and we look with deep interest on the face of this irreclaimable son of the wilderness, the child who will not be weaned from the breast of his rugged mother.'" (Parkman quoted in Sollors, 1986, pg. 116)

The logic of this view is insular. If Indians were seen as unable to adapt, it was their own failing that caused their destruction.

I think assimilation also played a great deal into the impression that Indians were disappearing. A key point here is not so much that there were less Indians and people of Indian descent around, it is just that they didn't fit a certain mould of what was considered an 'Indian'. The latter is the 'Imaginary Indian' after which Francis (1992) named wîya's book.

The Imaginary Indian

Francis (1992) recounts a telling story of poet Mair accompanying the Treaty 8 expedition in 1899 through northern Alberta. Francis describes Mair as unlike average Canadians of the time because of his extensive knowledge of Native people gleaned from years of work in Saskatchewan as a merchant trader. Nevertheless, he seemed to still believe that further in the

Edmonton AM on CBC radio January 7, 1994 did a story on Cree fiddlers of James Bay after the release of an album of the same name. One of the interviewees was elegant in his description of Cree people's adoption of fiddling. He said that they are progressive people who adopt things they see of benefit. The fiddle never replaced the drum but rather added to the social gatherings. He highlighted the evolving ways of the Cree people who adapt to new technologies. This progressive image struck me as a refreshingly new representation of First Nations Peoples, an important contrast to other images we hold.

bush, the Indians were more 'Indian'. He writes:

> "'One was prepared, in this wild region of forest, to behold some savage types of men; indeed, I craved to renew the vanished scenes of old. But, alas! one beheld, instead, men with well-washed unpainted faces, and combed and common hair; men in suits of ordinary store-clothes, and some even with 'boiled' if not laundered shirts. One felt disappointed, even defrauded. It was not what was expected, what we believed we had a right to expect...[we found] a group of common place men...'" (Mair quoted in Ibid, pg. 3-4)

Mair did not find his 'Imaginary Indian.' I believe that few people ever do. I believe this has more to do with the image of the 'Imaginary Indian' than with the existence of First Nations peoples. In Mair's story, he is explicit about what he's looking for: painted faces, uncombed hair, home-made (I venture leather) outfits and dirty shirts. What are we looking for today?

My foster brother and I went to visit a friend of mine who has a three year old daughter. The girl was playing dress-up and had on a fringed Indian princess costume. She asked her mother for another cookie and her mother, trying to limit her daughter's cookie consumption, said she didn't think Indian's ate cookies. My brother, a treaty Indian, piped up, "Yes, we do." The Indian princess stared at the dark haired, dark skinned man in jeans and a bomber jacket with a puzzled expression, "was he a *real* Indian?"

This is a contemporary story. In this

My teenage story about Indian boys being more attractive when they washed their hair seems to be rooted in the same stereotypes that Mair held in 1899. I can't help but sarcastically quip that maybe it's the dominant society that has trouble 'adapting' when it comes to our stereotypes.

I have told this story before and another mother pointed out that my brother's comment had been a bit unfair and subversive in regard to the mother's child rearing methods (i.e. limiting cookie consumption). I find it intriguing that at so very young an age, impressions are made in efforts to ascertain certain 'social control', to discipline these young bodies. We all do it, innocently enough.

story, the 'Imaginary Indian' does not eat cookies or wear jeans. It seems less derogatory than looking for 'dirty and uncombed' people. Nevertheless, the containment of conceptions within stereotypes, even though they seem harmless, still bind our thinking.

I believe the stereotype of the imaginary Indian is most striking when confronted directly by the reality. This story by a Cree teacher, quoted at length, speaks volumes:

> "I was teaching Cree children in a school in an isolated community. I had been using a Social Studies unit prepared especially for 'Indian' students. 'Relevancy' was the key then. We were talking about Indians. This slim Willow of a girl, beautiful as spring along the creek, sparkled to the back of the classroom saying 'I know what Indians are - I'll show you'. She brought me a book with the page opened to a picture of Indians dressed in beads, feathers, and leathers with tomahawks ready. For seconds, I felt stunned, frightened, elated. ... I recall the heavy sense of humility and compassion as I tried to draw them all inside of me. I opened my arms and put all of us into the whole and I said 'We - we are the Indians'. It was only after that afternoon was done, that I dared to look inside of myself and think over again the things that had been said and the feelings that these children had shared. It is still an experience that I pull out of my being when I need to be reminded that beneath the pain of labelling and separation, there was and always is a time when we are all one people. 'Indians' are

I would like to distinguish between this postmodern perspective and a more liberal approach. The latter would examine the negative stereotype and be abhorred by its blatant racism. Efforts at redress would be aimed at putting forth a moral imperative to end these misconceptions because they limit people. Positive images would be put forth to replace the negative ones of which I speak and a new stereotype (albeit more positive) would replace the old. The process of social construction as a continuing process would never be examined, though that is the dynamic at work. I find this postmodern approach more radical in that it goes deeper towards the root of the issue.

> fiction and dream-objects then."
> (Weber-Pillwax, 1992, pg. 20-21)

The imaginary Indian is predominantly a creation by non-Indians but has invaded everyone's consciousness:

> "One of the most severe problems the Native person is faced with today is that he [sic] is defined outside himself. That is, other cultures and other people have defined who he is supposed to be as well as what he is supposed to have been." (Laroque, 1975, p. 8)

In Laroque's treatise entitled Defeathering the Indian wîya rails against the popular images of Indians. Wîya argues that moccasins, teepees and pow-wows are perceived as the Indian culture whereas they are more representative of a heritage, not unlike the heritages of other ethnic groups who celebrate their past costumes, dances, songs, foods, etc. Laroque suggests that this misguided emphasis on material items such as glossy beads and colourful feathers negates the intangible wealth and vitality of a living culture.

What of the man in jeans and a bomber jacket? Is our image of Indians so very fixed in an imaginary world of the past that we cannot see the present?

Laroque continues wîya's argument by suggesting that the confusion between culture and heritage leads to the false impression that one must choose between "remain[ing] Indian (synonymously associated with staying on reserves or in the bush) and eventually perish, or join[ing] society, which is erroneously linked with becoming white." (Ibid, p. 11).

I once asked someone why Indians were rarely included in multi-cultural events and heritage festivals. The explanation struck me forcefully - 'we are not like them, remembering a glorified past within an assimilated present. We are a First Peoples who still are and need to continue to be a living culture of this place.' I just wanted to point out this rebuttal to Laroque's position.

The dichotomy Laroque presents is deeply entrenched in Indian policy in this country. Reserve life was seen as a stop-gap measure, hopefully quickly followed by assimilation, or, in the official policy jargon, 'enfranchisement'. This became an increasing emphasis when Indian reserves and the land they occupied were seen as a barrier to the influx of settlers and their efforts towards progress (Frideres, 1983). Indian education policy in Canada has, until the last two decades, worked towards assimilation, first through residential school and later through an integration policy. The imaginary Indian has been encouraged to remain a figment of our imagination.

The Invisible Indian

The imaginary Indian is closely linked with the disappearing one because the image is historical (and even then of questionable accuracy). These myths combine to give us the third impression, that of the invisible Indian. For if 'Indian' means the imaginary Indian of, in Laroque's words, a heritage and since the Indian is disappearing (which seems quite logical because the historical image is, indeed, disappearing) then there are no Indians. There is little place for the present reality of people of aboriginal descent in our consciousness so therefore we frequently don't see them.

Part of the invisibility has to do with a false belief that Indian people only live on reserves, at a specific, identifiable and usually remote location. Many status Indians do live on reserves but the overwhelming majority of people of aboriginal descent are not status Indians. The historical importance of a peoples identified as Métis come quickly to mind. But there were also those who

When my mother recently passed away, my immediate family went through her possessions thinking of people who should receive certain treasures. When we came upon a pair of mukluks my mother had made years before, the spontaneous agreement was that they should go to my Indian foster brother. For all the years he lived with us as a teen and remained in contact as an adult, most in my family still see him predominantly as Indian in the imaginary image of beaded leather footwear. It involves giving up the myth to really see him and notice that he prefers his black leather jacket, stylishly fitted, and other trend setting clothes.

A Nova Scotia Maliseet woman joined over 500 predominantly First Nations people at a local festivity. She exclaimed to me how refreshing it was to see so many Indian people together, a rare occurrence in her region.

took scrip instead of signing treaty or after signing treaty, those who married off the reserve and lost status and those who became 'enfranchised' for other reasons.

I don't believe that the invisibility of Indians has meant a type of equality through a non-recognition of difference. I believe my story above of rediscovering that there had been Native children in my school classrooms is a more accurate portrayal of the dynamics at work concerning the invisible Indian. It is a type of blindness, a systematic forgetting.

A good way to illustrate this point is through an anecdote. It pertains to an invitation my mother extended to me, knowing my interest in aboriginal issues. My home town church was planning a workshop on Native awareness to bridge the cultural gap. Unable to attend, I did speak with the out-of-town facilitator the next day at brunch after church. She had told me that when she was contacted, the local organizers asked her to bring along a Native person. She suggested they look in their own community for Native people among them to which they replied there were none in our town. They eventually found someone who was articulate enough for their purposes, much to their dismay.

The terrace on which we were enjoying our brunch conversation overlooks the river and as we spoke, an eagle flew overhead to which everyone's attention was drawn. Moments later, a Native man walked along the river bank. I do not know if anyone else noticed him. In the following days, I saw Native people everywhere in town: walking down the aisles in the grocery store, sitting in the

Hunter and Calihoo (1991) tell the story of the enfranchisement of the Michel Calihoo reserve in 1958 as seen by Calihoo, a teenager who had been raised in the dominant society but had lived on the reserve for a year before enfranchisement. Wîya describes wîya's position of "know[ing] somebody's language when they don't know you know" (Ibid, pg. 38) in speaking of the events of the meeting in which the decision to enfranchise was made. Wîya sets the prelude with descriptions of the ongoing debate on the reserve, highlighting the potential financial gain in status through being allowed to legally consume alcohol once enfranchised. The meeting in which the decision was made included some priests, the Indian Agent, some local farmers, a lawyer, a judge and all seventeen adults currently living on the reserve. Calihoo's version of the meeting describes a lack of knowledge on the part of the visiting delegation as to the legality of their actions and the confusion by the reserve members of what they were voting on (was it more discussion or an actual decision to enfranchise?).

Much later in the book, the full impact of the events of that August day in 1958 are revealed. By then, Calihoo was an employee of the Department of Indian Affairs. In the filing room wîya discovered seventeen cardboard boxes marked 'Michel Calihoo Indian Reserve No. 132 *EXTINCT*'. Wîya thought of wîya's spouse and children, were they *EXTINCT* also?

hospital waiting room, etc. I was utterly amazed that I could see so much in two days to which people living in this town every day were apparently blind.

My haunting recollections of the Indian who inhabited the Indian cabin across the river's mouth combined all three of these conceptions. He was disappearing, imaginary and invisible all at once.

POSITING LACK

I would now like to draw the analysis a little deeper. I believe I have successfully pointed out some themes concerning conceptions of 'Indians' in the section above. I am left with the question of 'why?' To strip away another level brings me to an analysis of how language is used in our conceptions. I now revisit the notion of deconstruction of language in more detail.

I spoke earlier of how words are more closely connected to other words or concepts than they are to the actual objects that they are trying to describe. With this recognition, concepts or ideas can be examined in relation to themselves and each other in a new way.

Deconstruction encourages us to examine what is excluded. Though this is a particularly fruitful endeavour concerning abstract ideas such as ideologies, I find it contains relevance for supposedly concrete topics such as a peoples. These latter are, as I have argued above, enveloped in myth and ideology. So when Derrida's deconstruction is described, as in the quote below, keep in mind that a notion

I must add that the local organizers of this activity were not the generation of women including my mother who had previously led the Mothers-Day-Out program. These latter women knew that there were Native people living in our town.

There is a second story about the Native man along the riverbank which speaks to me of my unlearning of racism that I wish to share here. It was written in a small essay that began: 'Nobody taught me to hate Indians' and continued by describing my response to seeing the stranger walking along the riverbank. My immediate and irrational response was fear. I had been taught to fear Indian men, fear that they would be drunk. I remember with queasiness the trail across the rail road tracks (a very real separation) having an intersection where the Indians would go to drink in the bush and I would pass with trepidation. I watched the man, he was clearly not drunk. I recognized my reasonable fear of all men who are drunk and accepted that. I watched the man, and he looked vaguely like my friend Earl. Earl is one of my mâmawonanâtawihow'kamik friends, a large fellow who when he hugs me lifts me off the ground. He lives on the reserve and has a passion for horses. He has a good heart though he's awkward at times. He can always make us laugh and smile with his goofiness. I watched the man, the man by the river, and thought of my friend Earl. I felt warmth towards the man by the river. No one ever told me to hate Indians, no one ever told me to like them either.

such as 'Indian' is also conceived through primary principles.

> "Derrida labels as 'metaphysical' any thought-system which depends on an unassailable foundation, a first principle or unimpeachable ground upon which a whole hierarchy of meanings may be constructed. If you examine such first principles closely, you can see that they may always be deconstructed. First principles of this kind are commonly defined by what they exclude, by a sort of 'binary opposition'. Deconstruction is the name given to a critical operation by which such oppositions can be partially undermined." (Sarup, 1990, pg. 40)

In everything I talk about, there is something I am not talking about, usually something not as valued, as nice, something negative. Deconstruction means not looking at what a word means but rather what it excludes. So to deconstruct, or depack, the word 'man' I might think of non-man, woman, lack of phallus, etc.

Understanding these binaries opened up a new way of thinking for me. In my previous chapters, I deconstruct the principles of objective science by suggesting that they exclude other ways of coming to know. I then embrace and support these other ways and choose to write from this other voice in order to undermine the dominant ideology. This is but one example.

Another example concerns the subtleties of the norm that is created in language around issues of race that were brought to my attention by a black colleague. She enlightened me as to the

Other binaries that are frequently mentioned in the literature include:

> "Day/Night, Man/Woman, Father/Mother, Sun/Moon, Activity/Passivity, Culture/Nature, Sense/Nonsense, Reason/Madness, Central/Marginal, Surface/Depth, Matter/Spirit, Mind/Body, Veil/Truth, Text/Meaning, Interior/Exterior, Representation/Presence, Appearance/Essence, and particularly prevalent for radical pedagogues, Theory/Practice, Structure/Agency, Production/Reproduction, Subject/Object, Teacher/Student, Oppressor/Oppressed, and Voice/Silence." (Orner, 1992, pg. 78)

I remember a graduate student coffee break discussion of the New French Philosophers who are associated with postmodern thinking. We spoke of one (I believe it was Foucault but don't quote me on that) who always joined the underdog group or political organization until it gained too much power or prominence. Wīya would then quit this group and support the new underdog contender. Wīya's rationale was always to advocate for the non-dominant side of the binary until it became dominant.

allusions concerning black and white. We refer to things being black and white inferring that white is the positive but rarely directly saying that black is negative. There is black magic, to black list someone, to black mail someone, to buy on the black market; a plague is a black death, the stock market shakes on a black Monday or Friday. Suggestions like 'to enlighten' or the light bulb representing a brilliant new idea further the insinuation by associating light with good ideas and thinking, something excluded from the realm of darkness, and, by inference, black people. The list continues but the suggestion remains that the dark is less valued or even to be feared. By pointing out these everyday references as they emerged, my colleague helped to develop my consciousness about the inferences I make through the words I use. I now see simple, everyday expressions as insidiously contributing to a continued entrenchment of racial oppression. Through her vigilant efforts, I have worked on how I talk, not so much about black people for in that I have already become conscientized to racist slurs, but about black and white phenomenon and how they have the potential to indirectly shape my and others thinking about race. I have come to see that "language is not simply a tool or device used by persons but is part of their very definition" (Kerby, 1991, pg 67).

You see, language operates effectively by using norms, often unstated and hidden within the binaries behind the obvious meaning of a word. Most things do not measure up to these mythical norms, therefore they lack something. Let me give some examples of this thinking that I have developed in the above narrative. Fostering children, a good and noble deed, contains

"rational argument has operated in ways that set up as its opposite an irrational Other, which has been understood historically as the province of women and other exotic Others." (Ellsworth, 1992, pg. 94) submerged within it the belief that these children are lacking in something. Holding education sessions on home making suggests that some people possess inadequate home making skills, according to the standards of those giving the courses. There is a mythical norm to which, upon closer examination, the majority measure up inadequately. The norm of personhood is euphemistically described as white, male, heterosexual, able-bodied and further as tall, blue-eyed, blond and physically fit. Rarely is this norm explicitly stated yet it is often implied. Most of us simply don't measure up. We are also keenly aware of how others around us measure up even less than we do.

I would like to pick up on the theme I developed in my storytelling about Mary as an inadequate mother. The norm that Mary had to live up to was that of my mother. I came to see Mary as a 'bad Indian mother' to which contrasted the norm of 'good white mother'. The bad = Indian was firmly reinforced and the possibility of 'good Indian mothers' was placed outside of possible existence. I was then unable to see a whole world of possibilities, having entrenched my knowledge of Indians comparative to a mythical norm which rarely fits anyone.

So when I approach my dictionary and look up the word 'Indian', I find the following definition:

> "*n.* **1** a member of any of the peoples who are the original inhabitants of the western hemisphere south of the Arctic coast region; Amerindian. **2** *Informal.* any of the languages spoken by any of these peoples. **3** a native or inhabitant of the

I recently encountered a fellow student through the computer network and we began dialoguing, mostly about navigating the information super highway. We had never met other than through words on the screen. To personalize our communication, we shared some information about our studies, our hobbies, etc. He told me he was a foreign student and asked about me in this regard. I told him I was Canadian. He responded by asking if I was blond, tall and slim like other Canadian women. I responded by asking him to open his eyes and look at the fellow students around him. Canadians come in all hair colours and skin tones, some are tall and some are short, some are slim and some are not, some use wheelchairs and some stammer, some wear turbans and some wear braids.

> Republic of India. **4** a native or inhabitant of the Indian subcontinent.
>
> *adj* **1** of or having to do with the Amerindian peoples or their languages. **2** of or having to do with the inhabitants of India or the Indian subcontinent. **3** made of corn or cornmeal: *Indian meal, Indian pudding.*" (Avis et al., 1983, pg. 592)

What the above definition is very careful not to say is that these original inhabitants are believed to be disappearing, that our image of them is historically wearing feathers (in North America) and also too frequently as the drunks of the inner city. By suggesting originality of inhabitation, there is a suggestion that things have now changed and what was, originally, is no longer. By tying Indianness to inhabitation of a certain region, it leaves no place for Indians to inhabit other regions, to choose to live in Europe or Africa or Asia or elsewhere. Indianness is tied to geography, not tied to personhood. There is no mention of race in this definition, unlike the words describing white as "a member of a light-skinned race" (Ibid, pg. 1283). The norms upon which Indians are measured are clearly different from other people, and that is why they cannot live up to mythical universal norms.

A colleague of mine who had taught on reserves 'up north' was telling me of a recent conversation about teaching Natives. Her listener asked her how she had dealt with all of the 'problems' teaching in a Native school? She said she had not been teaching problems, rather she had been teaching people. How much has the word 'Native'

Some other definitions that contain the word Indian also caught my attention:

Indian agent in Canada, an official of the federal government who looks after Indian affairs on a reserve, etc. [The Cree word for Indian agent, sônîyâw'kimâw, contains the word sônîyâw or money]

Indian file single file. [There is no derivative for this word but I can well imagine Indians lined up single file in residential schools or by other institutions of authority.]

Indian giver *Informal.* a person who, when offended, takes back a gift after having bestowed it. *Usage.* Based on the idea that an Indian giving a gift expected another in return, this term is insulting to Indians and should be avoided. [No comment]

Indian hall *Cdn. Historical.* a building or room where Indians bringing fur and other goods for sale were received. [Do I read in this the suggestion that there was another hall where non-Indians were received?]

Indian list *Cdn.* **1** the official register of treaty Indians. **2** *Informal.* the list of persons barred by a legal interdict from buying liquor. **be on the Indian list**. *Informal* **to** be barred by law from buying liquor. **to** be blacklisted. [The undercurrent in the association of these two definitions reflects a continuing societal perception concerning Indians and alcohol.]

become synonymous with 'problem?' It seems that anything that does not fit into the norm is lacking.

Inverting binaries

In following my arguments, you may well have come to the conclusion that we must make some adjustments to our conceptions of Indians because they are obviously incorrect. Instead of seeing lack, we must reshape our understandings to bring what we currently see as 'less than' into the 'it's O.K.' bracket. Replacing a negative stereotype with a positive one is a possible approach but it fails to examine the root issue. Crosby suggests that we must look at differences differently:

> "What is foreclosed is the possibility of thinking differently about differences, yet that is precisely what is to be done. Otherwise differences will remain as self-evident as identity once was and just as women's studies once saw woman everywhere, the academy will recognize differences everywhere, cheerfully acknowledging that since everyone is different, everyone is the same. Such is the beauty of pluralism." (1992, p. 140)

The point that I am making about language containing hidden insinuations does not only create and sustain what we come to know as 'negative' images or beliefs, it is equally effective at cementing positive images into restrictive cells.

> "Non-Indian Americans (mis)interpreted Indians and were (mis)interpreted by them--a normal fact of acculturation. Yet the much better documented white

How much of this is everyone's failure to live up to these norms? Is this inadequacy more tolerable if others are "more" different?

> American side of this process has come under increasing attack in the period since the 1960s, although some scholars in their valiant attempts to denounce past racism and prejudice have inadvertently exhibited their own projection. Thus, the American post-Vietnam ethnohistory of early colonial North America was amusingly described by H.C. Porters as an inversion and a cultural projection. ... In their very fervor to tear down the false idols of the past, contemporary critics may help to create another white man's Indian." (Sollors, 1986, pg. 103)

We have created new myths to replace the old ones, both being inaccurate depictions of a misunderstood other. In 1975, Laroque spoke of the noble savage image being replaced by the nature lover, the dirty Indian and the militant. I would like to focus on the first of these new stereotypes, the nature lovers or, as I have named them, the environmental Indians, in order to portray the falsity of this new stereotype.

Francis (1992) sees this image within the context of the disappearing Indian:

> Since the 1960s, we have been inundated with books and films celebrating the spiritual side of Indian life, the wisdom of the elders, the secret practices of sorcerers and shamans. Feeling an absence of the sacred in modern life, many non-Natives look to Indian culture for values they find lacking in their own. The environmental movement has given a boost to this new image by adopting the Indian as symbolic of

I am amazed at Laroque's books, written 20 years ago, containing so much insight that is still so relevant today. The militant Indian which was popularized with the advent of the AIM (American Indian Movement) in the U.S. has invaded the Canadian consciousness as a result of the Oka crisis in 1990.

I recently sat in a court room where Milton Born With a Tooth listened attentively to the judge naming him an 'environmental activist.' Sharing his thoughts after the trial, he considered this new label a victory. Being seen as an environmentalist is a definite improvement over a militant.

> a culture which lives in harmony with the natural world. This is the new Vanishing American, the Indian as spiritual and environmental guru, threatened by the forces of consumer culture. (Ibid, pg. 58)

I see more the contradictions that this new, generally positive, image contains. What, exactly, is an environmentalist? My beliefs involve a conservationalist perspective of such natural resources as petroleum products. As the following two examples suggest, my experiences with 'environmental Indians' have not shared this anti-consumerist conservationism.

The first example occurred three years ago when I, along with several other 'white' environmentalists, upon invitation, joined the Lonefighters' camp along the Old Man River on the Peigan reserve where they were protesting the Old Man River Dam. I went because I was curious, not knowing much about the Lonefighters other than what was in the news, and definitely not understanding the complexity of the issue which had divided the community. The images I retained from the differences between the environmentalists and the Lonefighters remain striking. We all arrived buddied up for the ride in small, compact, foreign built cars parked next to huge pick-up trucks. We ate granola while they cooked stew cutting meat off the hind quarter that hung high enough on a tree so that the half wild dogs couldn't get it. The fire boiled water for both herbal tea and strong, grinds included, campfire coffee. And we chattered endlessly, so much so that I was often tempted to tell people to shut up and listen for a bit, while they sat in silence around the fire, skipping off for private

The Lonefighters have caught the public's image of the militant Indian more so than the environmental one. The latter has been more seen by the alternative community who interpret the actions of the Lonefighters within the context of human rights and environmental struggles.

conversations. I learned that, according to an engineer, the Lonefighters had defied the laws of gravity by rerouting the Old Man River into its old bed and around the weir where it was to be diverted for irrigation purposes. This process involved heavy earth moving equipment. Residents of the nearby town had refused to sell the diesel involved in the operation of these machines to any Indians from the reserve in order to halt their reconstruction efforts. It seems that this environmental action had involved great quantities of a petroleum product. At the time I had this experience, I found these contradictions unsettling.

The second set of contradictions I present involves an Indian friend who I used to tease mercilessly because he always came by truck though he lived only a 10 minute walk through a meadow. At least 15 minutes before he left, he would head out and start his truck to warm it up for the drive home. One day, I confessed to him how guilty I felt driving alone in my car for an hour to reach my weekend refuge because of all the energy I was using up. He laughed endlessly about that. He used humour to poke fun at my misplaced sense of environmentalism. Then, in other ways, he shared with me his environmentalism. He taught me about respect for animals in the hunt. He spoke passionately against the toxic waste disposal dump, "Why did they build it on top of a hill? It has contaminated the whole area. The moose around there are all sick." My experiences with him showed both a consumerist and a conservationist side, two ends of a pole I did not believe reconcilable and yet they do successfully co-exist within him as do innumerable contradictions within us all.

I believe these examples highlight well that replacing one stereotype with another still misses the complexity of the contradictions we all live.

The border between us

Anzaldúa talks about the borderland between Mexico and the United States yet wîya speaks about borders between peoples. "Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* from *them*." (Anzaldúa, 1987, pg. 3)

... keep *us* 'distinct' from *them*.

I love to walk in nature and one of my favourite paths runs along a fence line, North to South, in a perfectly straight line, over rolling hills, through a swamp, across a road, into a lake. The fence marks the edge of the reserve (or is it the edge of non-Indian land, who knows). I walk this path frequently, usually with the dogs who dash about through the wooded sides of the trail, between bushes, chasing imaginary rabbits. They slip under the fence as if it is a low hanging branch, guided more by the scent they have picked up than by a sense of being on one side or the other. I look over to the other side and wonder about it. I see it as Other, as something unknown to me yet fascinating.

Which side is in and which side is out?

The land on the other side seems to have been cleared at one time in memorable history but the spruce trees are now several feet high as they regenerate the woodlands for which this reserve is known. I listen when people talk and they tell me that it was once pasture when farming on the reserve was a more common venture. They tell me there was a sundance ground up there somewhere but I would not know how to ascertain such a site. Besides, I never cross that border on my walks.

I was once driving around the reserve when I met up with a friend who lives there. He teased me saying I should be careful with my blond hair, I could get scalped on this territory. I felt he was trying to warn me about some other type of danger, something that I could see no easier than finding the sundance site, something beyond my recognizance. Maybe he was playing into a fear so old and ingrained, related to staying home when the aunties came to visit. I still somehow believed that Indians in groups were dangerous.

> "It is perfectly possible to argue that some distinctive objects are made by the mind, and that these objects, while appearing to exist objectively, have only a fictional reality. A group of people living on a few acres of land will set up boundaries between their land and its immediate surroundings and the territory beyond, which they call 'the land of the barbarians.' In other words, this universal practice of designating in one's mind a familiar space which is 'ours' and an unfamiliar space beyond 'ours' which is 'theirs' is a way of making geographical distinctions that *can be* entirely arbitrary. I use the world 'arbitrary' here because imaginative geography of the 'our land--barbarian land' variety does not require that the barbarians acknowledge the distinction. It is enough for 'us' to set up these boundaries in our own minds; 'they' become 'they' accordingly, and both their territory and their mentality are designated as different from 'ours.'" (Said, 1979, pg. 54)

Geographic boundaries are soon followed by social, ethnic and cultural

Fear, I am discovering, is at the root of many of our rigidities. How much is the construction of 'Native' built upon a fear of everything different and less understood? How much are our classification system, our borders, our arbitrary lines between people rooted in fear? How about our desire for scientific mastery over 'nature'? More fear?

ones. There are also boundaries in our thinking.

Bordo's (1986) article on *The Cartesian Masculinization of Thought* talks about Descartes philosophical stance and how it has influenced our thinking today. Wîya speaks about wîya's insistence in the separation of the self from the 'objective' world, something that had not been a tenant in thinking previous to wîya's time.

> "The medieval sense of relatedness to the world had not depended on such 'objectivity' but on continuity between the human and physical realms, on the interpenetrations, through meanings and associations, of self and world. Now, a clear and distinct sense of the boundaries of the self has become the ideal." (Ibid, pg. 449)

In wîya's conclusion, wîya suggests that we re-embrace the feminization of thought (not feminine in the gender sense but rather in the epistemological sense). Wîya advocates closeness, empathy and connectedness instead of detachment and distance as a natural foundation for knowledge. In this way, it is no longer the blurring of boundaries rather a lack of connection that equates with a breakdown in understanding. The focus on boundaries diminishes.

Indians (true Indians that is, treaty Indians, the ones that no one can deny are Indian, unlike Natives where there's more confusion), Indians have consistently been located on reserves, out of sight and out of mind of most of the public. When I discovered that there was an Indian reserve through which ran the main highway I knew throughout my growing years as the highway home, I was shocked at how this piece of information had previously been so concealed from me. Nobody had ever told me that the highway marker pointing to that village was pointing at an Indian reserve; we had never taken this turn, although several other places just off this highway were familiar to me.

The location of Indians on reserves has never been very 'neat'. This is largely due to the confusion around the definition of Indian. History tells of the Métis from the Red River area and later Saskatchewan having resettled throughout the northern woodlands. Treaty signing expeditions always missed groups, most notably the unresolved land claim of the Lubicon Cree Nation. Women marrying non-treaty men lost their status as Indians until the recent Bill C-31 which attempted to make amends for this sexual discrimination. Some Indians were enfranchised, sometimes whole reserves were swallowed up, such as the Calihoo reserve I have talked about in the other column.

Another less publicized ambiguity around the location of Indians concerns the selling of scrip as a relinquishing of Indian status. This is of particular interest to me because it has affected some people close to me who have told me of their family history. Several generations ago, they were asked to leave the reserve because they were not of Indian status. They crossed the border and squatted on the road allowance, building a small village of 20 shacks/houses. The only trace of this village is in the foundations remaining, the stories told by the old timers and a returning of some to a place they call home. Some historical research into this issue turn up a letter written in 1889 by the then chief of the reserve.

Here's an interesting statistic concerning status Indians not living on reserves. In 1958, when the Calihoo reserve was dissolved, all 17 adult members currently living on the reserve attended the meeting. The register of band members listed 53 people. This leaves 68% either children without voting rights or other people living off reserve, in our towns and cities, in our schools and churches, in our grocery stores and hospitals.

> "I have, on my reserve, several of these families who have received scrip but who are asking to be reintegrated into this reserve, agreeing to reimburse the government for the value of their scrip. For two years now, the hunt is not good ... It has become necessary that we share with them our meagre rations despite the fact that we do not have enough ourselves. But these are our close relatives and we cannot watch them suffer as long as we have something to share with them ... like white people, Indians do not like to see relatives suffer from hunger. And something that we would like to avoid would be seeing them desperate to an extreme, entering into activities found reprehensible by the law. To avoid all of this, the best solution would be to give permission to these families to re-enter into the treaty." (Blanchet, 1886-9)

I vividly remember the face of one of the women who had grown up there as an outcast, fitting into neither world completely and now having returned to find others like herself, I remember how her face changed when she read this letter. It was like wîya had been given the missing link that connected wîya to an undeniable though rejected part of herself.

As we try to fit people neatly into the boundaries we have set out for them, we begin to see that our thinking is what has been contained. This is the legacy of the borders we put around people--we end up containing ourselves. A white South African musician writes: "We are the prisoners of the prisoners we have taken" (Clegg, 1989).

Someone recently told me of meeting a Métis woman who spoke eloquently about her prejudice towards both whites and Indians. She described the racism she had endured from both directions. I read an item on a Native computer network from someone who was of mixed blood having struggled with wîya's place. Wîya finally approached an elder who told wîya "'We have never met a man that can live with only half his blood. But if you want, we can try to drain that non-Indian half out of you!" (Whitecoyote, 1994, pg. 1). This resolved the issue for wîya with humour.

Needing an 'Other'

Following a principle in physics that for every action, there is an opposite reaction, so for every conception there is a hidden binary. Could it be that the conception of Indian - disappearing, imaginary and invisible - contains as its opposite the non-Indian or white man or dominant society that is existing, true and present? Could it be that our myths about this 'Other' can more fruitfully be seen as foundational of our beliefs about ourselves? Said's (1979) work seems to suggest this.

As I mentioned earlier, though Said's work is addressed to issues of the Orient, the word could very easily be replaced by Indian without need of great revision to the principal ideas presented in wîya's text. Let me take a moment to review wîya's work before drawing upon it.

Said sees the Orient as "almost a European invention" (Ibid, pg. 1) in its image. It's existence as a concept is based upon European experience rather than any true reflection of the Orient. Orientalism is the deep and recurring image of another, exotic world created by the dominant European culture for material and political purposes.

When wîya sets out wîya's qualifications, wîya notes that Orientalism is not simply an idea to which there is no corresponding reality. What wîya does suggest is that the images have pervaded the reality. In another qualification, wîya points out that Orientalism is not based upon lies and myths which would shatter if the truth were known. The postmodern notion of representation would agree. There is no one truth which can possibly be represented, the representations are

In a book on effective job searching techniques, I read that an effective reference is usually somebody who thinks highly of themselves. When people speak of others, often they are inadvertently telling you more about themselves.

When I first picked up the book entitled Orientalism, I was certain I was reading a volume concerning peoples of China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Cambodia, Burma, Laos, etc. That was my image of the Orient. I was shocked to discover the references to be primarily to Arabic countries of the, what I would call, Near East. I consider this area hardly Oriental at all. Their people I would not describe as Oriental or even Asian. I wonder if this perception demonstrates a shift in conceptions through time, my writing in the mid-1990s compared to the text's perceptions in 1979. If so, how easily our conceptions of the world in which we live change. I wonder what great potential shifts await us in the coming years.

the many truths. Any search for the underlying true truth is an exercise in futility (Hutcheon, 1989).

> "[T]he major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures." (Said, 1979, pg. 7)

Wîya sees how discourses change ever so subtly but they never reverse the hierarchy that leaves the Westerner with the upper hand in relation to the Oriental.

Said does not agree with the distinction between pure or 'true' knowledge which is seen as non-political and more directly political knowledge. Knowledge pertaining to the Orient was often framed in objective language yet Said suggests that it was strongly embedded within political and material interests.

Wîya concludes wîya's introduction by suggesting that Orientalism is about dominant society's conceptions.

> "Indeed, my real argument is that Orientalism is--and does not simply represent--a considerable dimension of modern political-intellectual culture, and as such has less to do with the Orient than it does with 'our' world." (Ibid, pg. 12)

> "It [this book] also tries to show that European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self." (Ibid, pg. 3)

If I were to write Said's arguments from a Native perspective, they might read something like this.

The image of the First Nations People can be seen as predominantly a non-aboriginal invention. Its creation is based upon limited exposure to the Natives combined with an active imagination of what these others must be like. This image is sustained because of the expansionist tendencies of whites which required access to new resource bases.

That is not to suggest that there were no indigenous people on the Americas before the arrival of Europeans. It is to suggest that the European's over-active imaginations about the people they found here got the better of them. They were then, as they are now, unable to see the complexity of the people they encountered over 500 years ago. This can possibly be traced to their systems of thought that continually tried to break down complex phenomenon into simplified portions to create the illusion of understanding (mechanistic science).

Another important component of the European system of thought was a belief in their own superiority, although this is a common cultural quality when one group of people encounters another in which they are in conflict concerning resources. Sometimes the rhetoric will change and new stereotypes of people will emerge to replace outdated and negative images. The very simplicity of these new images continue to leave the hierarchy that maintains the European on top in place undisturbed.

The European system of thought likes to appear objective in how it presents information, particularly information

Said's presentation is a compelling argument for the case of needing an 'Other' to know the self. I have been explicit in this work that I am writing about my self and the dominant culture to which I belong. Though I may be talking about them, I am really talking about me. I seem to need them to see me, to see me more clearly, to see how I relate to them, to see how I define my relations to them, to see how I construct my interactions with them, to see my part in the negotiation we make for meaning, to see the dominance that I pull in this negotiation, to see how I come to know them, to see how I come to know myself, simply to see.

concerning aboriginal people. This apparent objectivity has, for several centuries now, added legitimacy to what were blatant political motives.

The last few paragraphs have spoken more about the European system of thought than given any relevant information about First Nations Peoples. In this way, much of what is written and said about aboriginal people is really, indirectly, written and said about European culture. The latter's attempts to capture and describe the former are very revealing of the latter's need of an identity, an identity that has been formed through contrasts with another.

I position myself as a member of the dominant society in this text but little is really so neat. I am also part of the 'dominated' or marginal groups by being a woman, being overweight, not being Christian, etc.

Why do we use the expression 'to see' when really we mean to experience, to feel, to think, to sense, to intuit, to imagine ... We often place visual information in primacy and place less emphasis on our other sense. No wonder we have such active imaginations, we have left so much out of our initial perceptions.

INTERLUDE

LOOSENING THE CHAINS THAT BIND

I read carefully the words of Pratt (1984) as wîya describes the change in wîya's awareness of racism and anti-semitism. Wîya speaks of significant events that have shaped wîya. The first was when wîya's father wanted to bring wîya up the attic steps of the court house of wîya's home town in order to look down upon it, to see the town from that angle of significance. Wîya describes what wîya might have seen from this place: the Board of Education, the county Health Department, the Methodist church, the bank, the post office, the doctor's office, etc. Wîya also describes what wîya would likely not have seen: the sawmill, the place where the mill workers lived, the black quarters, etc. But wîya did not 'see' and 'not see' these things because:

> "I never got to the top. When he told me to go up the steps in front of him, I tried to, crawling on hands and knees, but I was terribly afraid. I couldn't, or wouldn't, do it. He let me crawl down: he was disgusted with me, I thought. I think now that he wanted to show me a place he had climbed to as a boy, a view that had been his father's and his, and would be mine. But I was *not* him: I had not learned to take that height, that being set apart as my own: a white girl, not a boy." (Ibid, pg. 16)

As wîya chronicles wîya's journey to awareness, wîya speaks of wîya's recognition of wîya's oppression as a woman, discovering feminism in the 1960s, becoming active in Equal Rights Amendment activities, leaving wîya's

I'm reluctant to write the story of how I ended up at the mâmawonanâtawihow'kamik because it is very personal in the deepest sense and therefore a private matter that I choose to share only with my intimates.

I have struggled with how much to tell about my change in relation to my conception of 'Natives'. It is so intricately linked to a healing journey upon which I am being touched at very deep levels. Others, like Pratt (1984) speak of a political journey. Mine is a personal journey in the truest sense of the word; words of description, analysis and explanation feeling disrespectful of my own internal complexity.

husband and being forcibly separated from wîya's children when wîya came out as a lesbian and other processes of experiencing wîya's own oppression. Wîya speaks of one significant event, "'that soundless blow, which changes forever one's map of the world.'" (Ibid, quoting Russ, pg. 33): near where wîya lived, the Klu Klux Klan and Nazis opened fire and killed five people in an anti-Klan demonstration. In the newspaper coverage of the event, a Klansman's wife was quoted and Pratt recognized a former self. Wîya then develops a theme of the activities of frightened white Christian men acting out violence and hatred justified as 'protecting their women'. Wîya's activities and those of the female historical figures wîya describes were and are efforts to first learn about and then do something about those who are claiming to perpetrate violence 'in our names'.

I read Pratt's words carefully because I find myself sifting through my past to find significant events that might explain my changing attitude towards the 'Others' of my world. There were no shotgun blasts at a peaceful demonstration, there were only the newspaper reports of a teenage suicide of a Native foster child in the neighbouring town, and that hardly seemed significant to me at the time. My struggle with my 'Otherness' (and I have come to believe that we are all 'Other' in some way, some more and some less) did not involve the female oppression that Pratt describes in her marriage and in her lesbian lifestyle. I was 'female' in a family predominated by male children. I felt out-of-place in school because I was a brainy kid, with a self-imposed sense of moral superiority. My choices have often involved being different: immersing

On being an 'Other':

"Also, let us not forget that in America *all* writers can view themselves romantically as members of some out-group so that combining the strategy of oursiderism and self-exoticization can be quite contagious. In America, casting oneself as an outsider may in fact be considered a dominant cultural trait." (Sollors, 1986, pg. 31)

I hate that word 'lifestyle' because it insinuates that it's a choice people might easily make otherwise. I could choose an affluent, materialistic 'lifestyle' or a modest, humble 'lifestyle', I could live a glamourous 'lifestyle' or a reclusive 'lifestyle'. The word 'lifestyle' seems to add a flippant connotation, trying to trivialize something at the very core of a person--our sexuality.

myself in another culture, travelling to other continents. Throughout my life, I have put myself apart from others in ways too numerous to count, often stemming from my fear of rejection which was really a fear of myself. But search as I might, I have no dramatic tale to tell of how my thinking about 'Others' shifted.

I can share some personal experiences that belied the structures in which I was encouraged to think. I have already told you of Kiesha being far too familiar to me to truly be one of the 'Others' that were supposedly so very different. I also remember meeting a woman in Africa whose life paralleled my own in terms of our experiences, relationships, outlook, etc. Her black skin and unfamiliar-to-me culture were transcended as we shared our similarities.

These exceptions to the rules I was learning didn't shake the very foundation that was being built in me by the society in which I was living. At first, there was enough space in the framework for pieces that didn't fit. But some dynamic was at work, something I would describe more as the 'hundredth monkey' phenomenon. This is the idea that we can keep adding to the scale, piece by piece, and nothing changes until all of a sudden one additional item tips the balance.

When I think of the word 'prejudice' rooted in 'pre-judging' or judging before enough information is available to properly discern, then I have to look at places in my life where I was given more exposure to people, ideas, institutions, etc. before I judged them. These seemed to invariably happen when an existing structure clearly was not working any more that I had to open

I think back now at how I chose to attend a university for my undergraduate studies where social class was a significant factor. That many of the students were from well-to-do backgrounds was evident by their dress and behaviour (I remember never having seen so many limousines as outside the women's residence at the night of a certain ball). It was 'old money' and 'old families' who were sending their youth to the same institution that they had attended, to the same fraternities and sororities. My family was an immigrant family who had 'made it', still on the outside of those who had always 'had it'.

The role of social class in these matters was driven home to me when I met someone in my graduate courses who seemed secretive about something. As we became acquainted, she confessed to me her origins in the lower classes, something she worked hard to keep hidden in the predominantly middle-class environment of the graduate program. Though the liberal principles of social mobility are given lip-service, I believe that our sensitivity of the implication of our respective situations regarding social class were not misinformed concerns. There was and is a judgement about these matters between peoples that restricts us all.

up to new possibilities. More often than not, the decision was not conscious, I did not consciously decide to change my conceptions about the 'Other' and this change can be seen more as a side effect of other things shifting.

Pratt on the gains of change:

> "I learned a way of looking at the world that is more accurate, complex, multi-layered, multi-dimensioned, more truthful: to see the world of overlapping circles, like movement on the millpond after a fish has jumped, instead of the courthouse square with me the middle, even if I *am* on the ground. I feel the *need* to look differently because I have learned that what is presented to me as an accurate view of the world is frequently a lie." (1984, pg. 17)

So much of my change has come about as a willingness to live in the complexities of the world instead of the comfortable, simple, stereotyped views. It has been an embracing of the larger picture instead of a simplification of it. Why I have been faced with this challenge when many do not seem to be moved by this tension I do not know. I do know that there are others like me and together, we continually push at those who are not as if it is a role to which we are assigned.

Pratt speaks of changing for love "simply love: for myself and for other women" (1984, pg. 19). She contrasts this love with a sense of duty. She points out the voices that tell her she should work on these issues because they are 'right' but rejects them because they are part of the judging, condemning voices that build ideals which end up inadvertently separating

To not pre-judge is, in my mind, a spiritual act because it contains the seeds of unconditionality, an acceptance of what is. This is part of my view of spirituality and something I don't wish to discuss in any depth in this thesis yet which I must acknowledge pervades much of what I am writing.

As I was driving with my sister-in-law on an early summer day, we marvelled at the variety of flowers blooming in the ditch. She described how my brother (her husband) would try to identify them whenever they were pointed out. I told her that this was how we were raised. Flowers had been pointed out to us, identified, named, classified. Same with birds, mushrooms and animals. This fixing of categories was a pervasive process in our young worlds, one that extended to our adulthood. She heard my reflections of my formative years and understood how she had been judged by our discerning taxonomy when she was first introduced to the family. She did not have to say much but I knew her well enough to understand the pain this had caused her.

those who strive towards them from the less aware, committed, intelligent others/'Others'. This distinction is important because it speaks of metanarratives or the big stories that our society continues to tell itself; pervasive stories of justice and truth on a large scale that end up shaping our behaviours (disciplining our bodies, to use Foucault's expression) back into a regime of truth, albeit a seemingly liberatory one. These are the 'shoulds' which conversations with intimates suggest are oppressive carry overs from bygone belief systems of the way the world works.

I was involved, for several years, in organizations that worked hard to end the oppression of others. This is a process of 'liberation by analogy', of fighting another's battle because I didn't recognize my own oppression. It is doing what 'should' be done because of a vision of the world as unjust requiring certain types of actions to rectify it. But just as everything has its opposite (binaries, again), so systems are maintained by their opposition. I became frustrated by my realization that my efforts at changing what I saw as oppressive structures ended up reinforcing them.

It was only with a recognition that we are all oppressors and oppressed at the same time that I began to see the light. My self-righteousness disappeared to be replaced by a self-consciousness. Absolutes were dissolved. Ellsworth (1992) speaks of the turbulent evolution of the student's understanding of the complex issue of racism in a class wîya taught on the subject. They concluded that finding commonality to fight oppression (and thereby minimizing distinctiveness) was not the most effective approach.

I want to talk about the significance of spirituality in some of the same ways that Pratt talks of love. I hesitate to do this because of its indefensibility. I cannot explain what I mean by this word though I know its deep and pervasive power to open, to change, to move, to connect, to dispel, to transcend.

I see Pratt's condemnation of those who are working toward's change because it is the 'right' thing to do as a rejection of the metanarrative that 'truth' and 'justice' will set us free. There are many truths and justices that set some people free while enchaining others. I no longer believe in the 'one' way that encompasses all of us.

I'm reluctant to use the word oppression because it carries an implication of someone knowing who is oppressing whom. I'm not sure if that all-knowing someone exists.

Rather, they resolved that:

> "If you can talk to me in ways that show you understand that your knowledge of me, the world, and 'the Right thing to do' will always be partial, interested, and potentially oppressive to others, and if I can do the same, then we can work together on shaping and reshaping alliances for constructing circumstances in which students of difference can thrive." (Ibid, pg. 115)

I think often of all the lip service paid to how men are equally oppressed in patriarchy because they have to live in restrictive formulas. Yes, it has been, up until now, predominantly women's struggle through feminism to rail against patriarchy. However, men also have a place in this struggle not unlike what I am envisioning here as the role of a non-Native person in owning and subsequently changing our part in the Native/non-Native oppression.

Although I believe I understand Pratt when wîya says wîya does wîya's work out of 'love', I also see the self-interest in dissolving the chains that bind the 'Other' for we are also bound in them, though maybe less tightly. So to see the importance of change is both a selfish and selfless (unconditional love) activity.

Even though I suggested above that I was not faced with my own oppression in the dramatic ways Pratt describes through wîya feminism and lesbianism, I have become aware and resisted my construction as a white, heterosexual woman. What interests me here is the 'white' aspect of this equation. As with all these aspects, they are based on an exclusionary model, one which excludes

That is why I am writing in two columns. I am presenting my arguments in the one but I frequently refute myself or point out my recognition of the partiality of my position in this other column.

those who are not, in this case, white. These 'Others' are seen as less fortunate and therefore my relationships to them are only admissible if they are premised on good will, generosity and charity. I cannot tell you how often my relatives have praised me for my 'good' works when I have returned from Africa or become involved in the aboriginal community. Though it sounds like a cliché I must say that I have received more than I have given in these relationships, ever learning, ever broadening my horizons. My change has been premised on a resistance to my construction as a 'white' who so framed is limited in the available relationships she can have with 'non-whites'.

As I child, I travelled with my parents to visit my uncle in South West Africa. His children were off in boarding school so I was a lonely child among adults on the sprawling ranch. One day, my uncle showed us where his black staff lived, just over a hill from the ranch. Here I found children my age, potential playmates within walking distance. I did not understand why I was forbidden to scale that hill. I remember that trip mostly as one in which I was bored.

I believe we are all constricted by the definitions of who we are supposed to be, some more dramatically than others as in cases of violence caused by racism or sexism or homophobia. I believe we all have a stake in resisting them within our own worlds in our own ways.

My relatives have been the strongest discipliners of my heterosexuality and my womanhood. As a woman, I am to relate to men only as potential mates or brothers/fathers/cousins. My platonic relationship with a married man was frowned upon. Some of these relatives also made it abundantly clear that there would be no good reason to associate with homosexuals. When I told of my collaboration with a colleague, I was met with enthusiasm until I let it slip that her partner is a woman. The dampened responses were tangibly cool and I believe I could see a twinge of fear in this relative's eye that I might be lesbian, a fear accentuated by my enthusiasm for feminist thinking and my unmarried state. Fear is a powerful force, its antithesis Pratt's 'love'.

I write South West Africa because that was it's name at the time. This name represents to me the white construction of this place. Today it is Namibia.

Am I here suggesting another metanarrative, one of freedom from the oppression of social constructions?

CHAPTER 4

DECONSTRUCTING 'NATIVE' IN ME

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is about the processes. I have wrestled with how to present this dynamism, how to tell you about the mâmawonanâtawihow'kamik not as a static enterprise but rather as a shifting and changing affair, how to speak not from the view from the court house tower but rather as the rippling pond that Pratt (1984) describes. I refer you to my loose research question about what the mâmawonanâtawihow'kamik has taught me about 'Native' and the meaning of this related to Native education.

When I speak of what the mâmawonanâtawihow'kamik has taught me about 'Native', I'm not talking about what a Native is or is not, I'm rather talking about the whole idea of Native.

In the interlude, I spoke of change. I don't wish to report the outcome of that change here, as if chapter 3 is a before statement, the interlude describes the change and this chapter presents the outcome. Such linear sequencing would obscure the complexities at work.

I decided to do that by de-centring the centre or the mâmawonanâtawihow'kamik almost totally. I will speak more of the people than of the centre and yet I am really talking about the centre through the people.

As I introduce these people, I am aware of my focus on their relation to the categories of Indian/Native/Cree /Métis/white/European. I believe in this way some of the complexities of these social constructions begin to manifest themselves.

I realize that these introductions are but simplifications of complex people.

So I begin by introducing you to the centre through it's members, here fictionalized. I follow this introduction with a discussion on essentializing identity, addressing how this dynamic works and the challenges to it. I end the chapter with a glimpse of the shape that rethinking or revisioning the notion of essences, though the full discussion of this is left to chapter 6.

I'D LIKE TO INTRODUCE YOU TO ...

Stuart

The first time I met Stuart, I saw him in the distance. He was walking with a staff that spoke to me of age, or a desire to appear older and wiser for as he drew nearer, his age seemed to parallel my own. His blond hair was braided. His cheeks were chubby with what I associated as an eastern European glow. He wore several ornaments around his neck: beads, pendants and a medicine bag. As he approached, I found myself being disgusted at the thought of what I perceived in front of me: a white man gone Indian! I have learned that the expression for this phenomenon, so popularized by a resurgence in fascination for all things Indian, is a 'wannabe'.

I was wrong, very wrong. Stuart is a blond, light eyed Cree. He is Indian in all the definitions of the word with which I am familiar. He carries a treaty card, belongs to a band, lives on a reserve, is embedded in the cultural life of the reserve, practices Cree traditions, etc. That he seemed a caricature to me initially belies the fact that I relied heavily on physical appearances as a determinant of Indianness.

Jean

Jean and I often wait for the tea to

I later learned that his staff was a discipline stick, the discipline of its continual accompaniment containing lessons for him.

When I speak of my friends, I find I am not yet ready to de-genderize them with the expression wîya as I have done with the gender of the authors I have been quoting. I know them as gendered individuals, unlike the authors of the texts I read from which I desire to remove that category.

steep, talking about what we talk about. One day she told me about when she got her treaty card after 1986, after bill C-31. She looked at the card and it said she was an Indian. She laughed, "I wonder what they thought I was before?" She's always been an Indian, even though her family was asked to leave the reserve in the early 50s by the band because they were not official members, they were not treaty Indians. So they moved across the line/fence/border and squatted on the other side, with a blessing from their friend and neighbour who owned the land. I asked about being Métis and she didn't really pick up that thread of thought, that term.

Jean continues. She says there are a lot of whites who have Indian cards and some Indians who can't get them. She says she doesn't even know who's an Indian and who is not so how could the government possibly know. She says it's no different than me being German or something else. What does it really matter anyway?

Jean lived with her grandparents. Her grandmother was from the reserve but had married out so they lived on the borderland. Her father was from another nearby reserve. She says she's only ever been at his reserve a few times in the last 10 years. Once, when she was there, they hesitantly asked her if she wanted to come and live there now that she was on their band list. She figures they were hoping she would say no so that they wouldn't have to build her a house. She said she never lived there before, why would she want to live there now?

For those who know Jean at all, this question of moving seems ridiculous. I know Jean to be a person of place, a

When I discovered chatting with people through newsgroups on the computer network, I sure didn't expect to meet such fascinating people. So while I'm introducing you to my friends from the mâmawonanâtawihow'kamik, let me contrast that with an introduction to an electronic friend. The difference between the two is that my electronic friends I know only through their words. My other friends I know through their bodies, their actions, their words, their locations, etc.

I'm quoting almost an entire posting of Whitecoyote which relates to the topic under discussion. The conversational tone is quite typical of network communications so I leave it unedited. I have asked his permission to include it. I find it to be a gem of insight.

"Indian or Not... Stupid question

To many traditional folks, the issue of if you are Indian and if you are not is foolishness. The connection is with the culture, family, and friends. I am half German and half Anishinabe (that's Ojibway to you). For many years I had problems with my mixed blood when one of the reservation elders put it to me this way, "We have never met a man that can live with only half his blood. But if you want, we can try to drain that non-Indian half out of you!"

A good laugh was had by all and needless to say I haven't had a problem since. (grin)

This is a very touchy issue among us. So I will not talk for anyone else, but here are my *thoughts* be they wrong or right they are mine.

I have met many people in this life. I

person deeply connected to certain land: this hill, this land, this place. Her husband likes to travel but Jean likes to stay home. Sure, she will go to town if her daughters come and get her and she might even stay over at their place for a night (never two), but something strong pulls her back to this land. Jean is also quiet in nature, difficult to really get to know. She fits my stereotype of the quiet, stoic Indian deeply rooted in place, deeply spiritual. Her wisdom is profound, her patience never ending, her silence impenetrable, her connection to the land as strong as steel.

Yet for all my placing of her in the Indian category, she's also the one who has taught me the most about transcending the categories. Her quiet support for being true to yourself instead of some external definitions has enriched me. When a white man came, versed and rooted in Indian culture and ceremonies, speaking openly about being white and yet being gifted with this knowledge, Jean was the most accepting, looking past his ethnic heritage into his heart.

Willow

Willow jokes with Stuart about having 'blond' moments. They are really talking about being fair in a group that is predominantly dark in features. They are not talking about being Indian because it is not an issue. Willow grew up here, by the reserve, by the Métis settlement squatting next to the reserve. She works on the reserve now. She attends ceremonies there. She knows the customs, the culture, the traditions, the ways. Her children have pow-wow costumes and I am collecting tin cans for Willow so that she can make jingles for another costume. She keeps these outfits neatly folded in a am lucky in that I have gotten to know many of them personally. Some of them have Newsreaders too and when they see the following will know I am talking about them, that's ok because they should also know how I feel. But for my sake I shall use false names to describe the following.

Carol is a Navajo Indian. Born on the Rez near Window Rock. When she was young her parents moved to Los Angeles and she was raised there. She went to White dominated schools and had all White friends. She was teased about being Indian and often was mistakenly called "Mexican." Now she is a young adult working as an Financial Assistant. Her parents have long since returned to the Reservation and she does not like going back to see them because of the poverty and the "old" ways bother her. She likes the fast life, things that shine, career advancements, and she proudly proclaims that she is a successful Indian and a good example of the future of all Indian Nations. Yet, she longs for the traditional teachings but only out of curiosity about "the red way." No one on the Rez will teach her.

Robert is from the Northwest tribes. He has a PHD and is a Professor at a Major University. He is half Indian, half White. Born and raised on his Rez with nothing but traditional teachings. Don't even know if he is enrolled.

Linda is totally non-Indian. She has lived on the Pueblo Rez and grew up with the people there. She has been adopted into an Indian family and she enjoys the benefits of full cultural participation.

Jack lived on the Rez, grew up there, but had to move to Los Angeles in order to get a job. He has been here for 20 suitcase in a special place in her chaotic, child-filled house. This is done in respect for the eagle feathers that form part of the costumes. In the winter, she gets folks together to do bead work at the centre on Sunday afternoon. She always arrives in her bright red, four wheel drive truck. I see Willow as feathers and beads in the modern version. It seems to come naturally for her.

When Willow heard I was doing research that brought me into the archives, she ask me to look up a distant relative, a great-great grandmother who was supposedly Indian from a nearby reserve. This is the drop of Indian blood in Willow's heritage. Proof of this ancestor's existence would be nice, but not necessary. Willow knows who she is.

Marguerite

Marguerite has been reading history a lot lately. Her house is decorated in antiques so her historical interest comes naturally. She's particularly interested in a certain trader from a century or two ago who's last name she inherited. She's pretty sure she's his descendant. He had taken an Indian wife, as historians tell us was the custom of the time.

She now looks back at her childhood memories and pictures with a new recognition. She is Métis even though her siblings would deny it.

She's been rather taken by the discovery of her Indian heritage. She has started to attend ceremonies, finding meaning in her hidden roots. Marguerite was a civil servant before she retired, living in the mainstream of society. Her personal growth combined years and now feels he is losing touch with the culture, and poverty or not... he is going back to what is more valuable.

Ted also is non-Indian. He is with a group of non-Federally recognized people that continue their ways. He owns a large chunk of their land and allows them full access to it. They have built a sweatlodge on his property and hold many tribal functions at his house. Over time he has done many things for the tribe and he now attends the sweats too. His Lithuanian heritage is still there but no one cares.

Susan grew up on the So.Ute Rez her whole life. Yet she was called a wannabe by darker-skinned tribal members.

Karen is a White "do gooder, new ager" that proclaims she is descended from a long line of Great Cherokee "royalty" and that her blood ties with her crystal have been verified with the moon and planets (or something like that). She has been trying for years to gain acceptance into the local Indian community without success (gee I wonder why?).

I once had the job of sitting on a jury, so yes I am being judgemental in the following, but to me, because I know Carol so well, she may have 100% Indian Blood, Indian Skin, but I don't recognize her as Indian.

Robert has found balance between two worlds and is very much Indian.

It doesn't matter that Linda is non-Indian for she enjoys full participation in the culture. She is just Linda and we love her for just that.

with a strong connection to country life led her to the centre. The rest is history.

Alex

Alex came to the centre before it was a centre. She was Jean's daughters' friend. Jean and her family soon adopted Alex who had been searching for a home more years than she can recall having been fostered through childhood.

Alex is the one who I hear use the term 'Indian' more than anyone. She once asked me what I understood 'Indian' to be. I answered by asking her what she understood 'white' to be. She had an answer for me (I don't recall it right now) but I had none for her.

I have a mug that Alex gave me when she came back from a trip. It has Indian symbols on it. I can still hear an echo in the wind of what she called out to me as she drove away in her beat up old pick-up after delivering her gift: 'Remember, that's from an Indian who loves you.'

Alex is a musician. The lyrics of the songs she writes are as hauntingly beautiful as her voice. I'll let her own words tell you something about her:

NOBODY'S WOMAN

An Indian child was born
But her mother gave her no name.
She was only 17
And she cried as they took her away.

The child was raised by white men,
But she didn't understand
Her heart did not belong to them
It belonged in a different land.

Jack is an Urban Indian cutoff from the tribal ties.

We pick on Ted in a good way, but many of those Indian people consider him a "real human".

Susan does not know "what-to-be." (Of course she's Indian.)

Karen... give me a break.

The key here is not blood, DNA, teeth or hair color. Many of us "real Indians" use our enrollement cards as an excuse not to live in a good way, or walk a good balanced life. Yes those same people ARE STILL Indian and they have rights to their history, family, and tribal organizations. But are they recognized by their community? Do they contribute to life? Unlike the Western Culture, we are more comfortable with grey areas. Everything is not Black-or-White, nor are complex questions like "Who is Indian." Chances are, if you ask yourself, "Am I Indian?" then you probably are not.

(No charge for speling air-or's)"
(Whitecoyote, 1994)

In another message by the same author, I found this poem entitled Ode to the Wannabe

"** Warning: The following was ment in humor. If you are humor imparred, politically correct, or a Cherokee Wannabe... then click on the next message and ignore this one. **

(grin)

Once I sat on my grandmother's knee
While she told me stories what I could be
She told me to love every rock and tree

Nobody's woman,
No mother's child,
Nobody's woman,
Alone in the wild.

"God, where are my people,"
Her hands raised to the sky,
"I'm all alone out here and
I need the will to survive."

She was taken on a journey
For direction she'd look up.
She'd soar among the eagles,
But on earth she'd walk alone.[1]

Alex once told me of her growing up. She would go off into the woods to escape her foster family. She would bring some flour and water and cook bannock over an open fire which she was not allowed to build but did anyway. She didn't know where she had attained the knowledge to cook bannock in this way. She laughs that it is probably inherited knowledge.

In the same breath, I hear about her adventures going to visit elders up North when she was trying to find herself. Her face wrinkles up as she tells about dishing out the stew that contained whole heads of rabbits, eyes staring out at her. She laughs when she says she's never going to go 'bush' again.

Then, in the next breath, she's telling me about a cabin in the woods that she wants to make her home, to live traditional style.

Carl

Carl is up early, revived with coffee and off to work. He's the type of person that makes things happen. He's the one who made the building we call the centre happen by working so that others would join in and work. He's the

Because in my blood there is Cherokee

Now I admit I was shocked but proud
And now I proclaim it strong and loud
I was then called a wannabe
but I'm not, I'm 1/256 Cherokee!

So it was with great hesitation
That I finally went to the reservation
I said, "I am Cherokee, can you help me Mister?"
He said, "What about your brothers and sisters?"

I asked the man what he meant
And he asked me why I was sent
I said to prove that I am a Cherokee
and not be called a wannabe

I just "know" things and love the trees,
It is because I'm a Cherokee
With a look he wore before
He asked to leave through the door.

Standing at the curb the splash hit me
from a puddle and a passing Jeep
Cherokee"

(Whitecoyote, 1994)

one who gives so that others will give too. Things do not remain static very long around Carl.

I see Carl as a strong contrast to his wife Jean. Carl is the yang, the outgoing energy, always looking for people to be with, always with a pot of coffee ready for visitors, always greeting folks as they arrive and showing them around, often talking about trips he would like to take. There's a lucidity to Carl's bright blue eyes, a clarity of purpose, an openness of expression.

Carl is unquestionably white, despite his sun darkened face. His children are brown, some of his children-in-law also. Some of his sons-in-law as well as some fellows from the reserve and the general area work for him in his construction business. He contracts on the reserve and among the holiday cottagers along the lake and the farmers on the land. Carl is a model to me of how he treats people the same despite their visible differences.

Carl found plenty to talk to me about for months before the issue of my social class ever arose. He never asked me what I did for a living because that seemed irrelevant to my personhood. After months of going to the centre, I remember him finally saying something like, "I don't know what you do for a living but I believe you have a good education." When I told him I was working on a master's degree, he politely asked what that was; never having had much opportunity at education himself, he had no exposure to these erudite terms. But things never changed between us, his friendly comraderie continued. It was as if this difference called education and its implication on social class were of no consequence to him.

Lin

Lin picks Jean up on Saturday morning to go check out some garage sales. They return with the car loaded, joking as only good friends do. When thinking about supper, they jest about serving rice to their meat-and-potatoes husbands. Lin loves rice and could eat it with every meal, possibly a carryover of having been raised on it.

Lin's mother died when she was young and she was raised by a black housekeeper. Her oriental (I'm not sure of a more specific distinction as she's never said Japanese or Chinese or Vietnamese) father she describes as a cheap curmudgeon, in contrast to what I see as her generosity. She's married to a white man and her best friend is an Indian woman. How she navigates this plethora of relationships and manages to locate herself within it, I do not know. I think part of her answer lies in accepting what's in front of her at face value.

Lin loves to do crafts: sewing, stitching, hooking, gluing, painting, etc. When Willow started the craft circle, Lin brought her moccasin patterns, discussed styles and motifs, and joined in.

Just a few words about the mâmawonanâtawihow'kamik

How and why and wherefore this diverse group of people and many others came together to hammer nails, butcher moose meat, donate insulation, make music, eat together, and support one another's healing journey is still a mystery to me.

I notice that I speak more of women who I have met than of the men for the gender lines seem to be a stronger boundary in this healing community. The part of me that rebels against boundaries and categories wants to speak out about this. The part that keeps me silent is not fear, it's a type of understanding about the confusion that arrests healing when gender invokes sexuality and distracts people from their hard healing work.

I have included a copy of our official objectives as a society in Appendix 1. Our commitment to them lies only in formality for they were drafted in committee and passed without any meaningful deliberation.

The objectives state that we "reaffirm the values, philosophy and customs of Aboriginal/Indigenous people" (see appendix 1). Our interpretation of this principle is loose. Our meetings begin and end with prayers, we often conduct our business in a circle, the person holding the feather has the exclusive right to speech. We own a teepee, ostensibly to hold healing circles that have been discontinued because of a lack of appropriate leadership.

Whenever I try to describe the centre to people, I cannot help but speak of the different sense of responsibility that I have experienced there. Often things happened without great planning meetings or deliberation because there is no need to 'organize' in the conventional sense. People pitch in and take responsibility for the success of activities without having official volunteer job titles or duties assigned. The building was built by people getting together and having work parties. No one was in charge although those with more knowledge contributed what they knew. No grant money or outside donation were solicited because people took responsibility for the project and donated their time, money and material when they could. When work parties extended over the day, people broke off to prepare a meal for the workers. Some who hunt brought a moose for the freezer that someone had donated and shared meals became regular weekend occurrences. We did not have a meeting and decide to have weekend

I was recently at an aboriginal camp on the morning of departure. We knew the bus would leave at noon yet people began straggling out of their tents for breakfast around 9. Within three hours, the camp was struck, everything was cleaned up and the bus was loaded. This happened because once everyone was mobilized, people just worked really hard using their skills of observation to figure out where to pitch in. People took responsibility for pieces of the job without being asked, just because they saw what needed doing.

potlucks, they just happened.

I talk of this sense of responsibility because it is a shifting, moving, fleeting phenomenon. There are no fixed roles for the members of the mâmawonanâtawihow'kamik in relation to the working of a non-profit organization. Likewise, the roles in other forms, roles related to people's position regarding the designation of 'Native' are equally transient.

HOW ESSENTIALIZING WORKS

As I mentioned earlier, the question underlying this work is a reflection on my own learnings through my association with the mâmawonanâtawihow'kamik. There are many layers of which only the first few are being stripped away here. My description of the formation of my conceptions in the last chapter speaks of their pervasive strength and reinforcement. This unravelling process has been brief in comparison, only a beginning.

With the introductions I have made above and this reflection upon them, I want to reveal a new, shifting ground. I do not want to displace one conception with another, equally rigid. Rather I want to point at the existing conceptions, their flaws and limitations. This is not a theoretical exercise of disproving one theory and offering another built as an answer to the weaknesses of the first. I have no answers, only my own story of my journey through ideas, not really a progression to the ultimate understanding so much as an interesting trip, the telling of which may enrich the listener. I can talk about my current location on shifting ground not as a paramount destination but as the place

It seems so simple the way I have put this forth but the learning I experienced from participating in the mâmawonanâtawihow'kamik are profound because I experienced them at a lived level, not just as abstract learning.

Recently someone described wîya's experiences in an earth quake zone. Wîya talked about the ground moving in waves. It was an unsettling experience for wîya, one to be escaped, the solid ground of home to be sought. At times, I have felt the same way about my learning about different ways of thinking. I strive for concrete understanding, for clarity and solidity only to have things dissolve into a mass of jelly. They say you get used to living in earth quake zones.

at which I am and a challenge to those located elsewhere.

So let me begin this description/representation of my journey through ideas with the notion of 'essentializing.' I first came to understand 'essentializing' in relation to women's identity. The idea is simple. It is a belief in the existence of an 'essence' or deep underlying qualities within everything. I believe it was first developed in mechanistic scientific thinking that believed natural objects could be broken down into their constituent parts. It has been applied to identities in that a certain grouping of people, for example women, are believed to have the same essence, for example to be nurturing and passive. The ridiculousness of this process becomes quickly evident as examples of non-nurturing and non-passive women abound. But this seems to be an easily overlooked fact because of the entrenchment of the system of knowledge upon which this thinking is based.

Rutherford (1990) suggests that this phenomenon is grounded in Western knowledge system's reliance on an "originating moment of truth or immanence, from which our whole hierarchy of meaning springs" (pg. 21). Wîya continues, "By invoking its claim to universal truth, such a system of knowledge hides cultural diversity and conceals the power structures that preserve their hierarchical relations of difference" (Ibid, pg. 21).

The suggestion of hierarchies shows binarisms at work. Potential differences are reduced to polar opposites. One term is premised over others, invested with a certain truth or status at the expense of it's opposite.

In working on a presentation on exposing the social construction of 'student' with a colleague, I find myself asking the purpose of our presentation. Wîya's reply is that we are interrupting existing conceptions. I still ask the purpose of our interruption. Wîya explains that I seem to be looking for a metanarrative within which to frame a purpose for our presentation. The point of the presentation is that students are not monolithic entities. It would be inappropriate to replace the existing stereotypes with our own, so we are interrupting them and likewise, interrupting our own need for purpose, for a clear vision of where we are going with this.

The very label 'essentializing' is a simplification of a complex process. Language fixes us within this thinking.

I still remember an undergraduate class in social psychology in which the lecturer explained how we categorize people. Wîya pointed out a lawn chair, an arm chair, a rocking chair and a dining chair and though these items vary greatly in appearance, we still recognize them all as chairs. We often do that with people who vary greatly in appearance but seem to hold one similar (essential) characteristic. The lecturer explained how our minds 'naturally' organize chaotic inputs (different people) into similar categories (labelled people). Wîya seemed to be indicating that this a natural, uncontrollable process, the only thing changeable about it being the groupings, the labels and their connotative values (negro's become blacks and blacks become beautiful). I think there might be another way of thinking about how we think about things.

As we see ourselves from Pratt's (1984) courthouse tower, we see (or maybe do not see except by implication) the 'Other' as being everything that we are not. As we speak from that originating moment of immanence we relegate all else to being 'less than'. As we speak of the 'Other', we talk less of this 'less than' or 'lacking' than we demonstrate our knowledge system's reliance on an imminent truth which excludes.

When I look at how this plays itself out through my introductions, I can point out how I have constructed Jean as fitting into my old (and I believe society's general) stereotype of an Indian. I told you that she is stoic, rooted in place, quiet, difficult to get to know, spiritual. I am basically telling you that she is not expressive, moving, interactive, easy to get to know, intellectual. I am also telling you that these are the things that "I" find/found important to talk about when the topic is 'about' Indians.

The categorization of which I speak are not necessarily indicative of demeaning intents. Essentialized identities have been used effectively by groups asserting themselves from the margins of society. Indians/Natives are no exception. The movement of "Indian Control of Indian Education" is an example. The 1972 position paper of the National Indian Brotherhood strongly articulates the belief in a unique set of attributes of Indians. Expressions such as these abound: "we assert that only Indian people can develop a suitable philosophy of education based on Indian values adapted to modern living" (Ibid, pg. 3) or the belief that educational failure can be combatted by "recognizing Indian language, life and customs" (Ibid, pg. 11). Though the

Even how I set up these oppositions speaks of my categorizations. Is the opposite of spiritual intellectual or is there such a thing as non-spiritual?

Alex's question to me about "What is Indian?" is another example of this search for essence, for the true nature. I have noticed her frequent and definitive (as in the lyrics of her song) use of the word Indian as self-reference. I believe it is partly a desire to understand oneself, sometimes in relation to others' definitions (wanting to know what I think is Indian).

National Indian Brotherhood does not spell out the exact nature of Indian people, it certainly suggests that there is one.

There are ample illustrations that do put forth an essentialized notion of Indian used to promote a positive image. I choose only one example here for illustrative purposes. It is also from the same time period:

> "There is a great deal that Indians can give to the Western way of life. There is a sense of relaxation in the concept of time, and there is an appreciation of living close to nature without polluting one's surroundings. Indians show warmth for family life; they express a deep concern for their fellow members in the community; and they show a sense of humour even in dire circumstances. They endure great pain without apparent emotion. Their's is a culture which could emphasize peace and contentment." (Wuttunee, 1971, pg. 116-7)

Using essentialized identities effectively for political change has often involved redefining the issues through depacking the existing words by asserting new meanings or changing the language. Expression such as "Red Power" "Black is Beautiful" "Gay Pride" are examples of depacking the binarisms (Rutherford, 1990). Changing the term to 'First Nations' redefines the issues. I see this as predominantly a political term used in negotiations with the federal government. It is a strategy which reinforces the view of nation to nation talks, suggesting allies in the international community of nations and thereby strengthening the negotiation position (Jenson, 1993). These are just

Note that this is put forth by a member of the group being represented. Wuttunee wrote this as the former chief of the National Indian Council of Canada. Said (1978) suggested that Westerners and Orientals are equally bounded by the discourse wîya called Orientalism.

Likewise, non-Natives and Natives alike both can and do operate within the system of knowledge which purports essentialism. The challenge to this thinking is not a case of Native cosmology needing to influence/replace Western cosmology with a more enlightened vision of difference. It is something accessible to all since all can and do draw on essentialism.

Wuttunee speaks of the sense of humour attributed as an Indian characteristic. I ask myself how much I am perpetuating that stereotype in my above introductions where I reference joking in several places (Stuart and Willow about blondness, Jean and Lin about rice).

Wuttunee's booklet is a response to Cardinal's 1971 treatise, Unjust society which speaks in no uncertain terms about the desires of Indian people for more control of their lives. As I recently reviewed my notes on Cardinal's work, I notice an absence of any detailed discussion of identity. It is as if it was seen as unproblematic, a non-issue in this tumultuous time of rights assertion. I can't help but wonder if the obscurity some concrete examples of how essentialized notions are used for specific purposes.

HOW ESSENTIALIZING DOESN'T WORK

When the predominantly middle-class, white feminists spoke of their essentialized identity as women to further the cause of feminism, women of colour found that they could not relate to the former's experiences. Their challenge became a challenge to the notion of essentialized womanhood and provided an opportunity to move beyond essentialism (Crosby, 1992). This challenge is important because it points out the holes in our thinking. Beyond that, it dares to suggest that these things can change. In this section, I want to look at both the problems and the opportunities they might generate.

Recognizing diversity

One of the failings of essentializing categories of people is that the diversity within the designated group cannot be adequately acknowledged. The meaningfulness of the category relies on the unity of those it contains. Here is the problem I suggested the feminist movement faced when some women stood up and said they did not feel they fit into the category as it was being defined by other women. The voices were strong and required accommodation so subcategories of women (differing races, social classes, sexual preferences) were acknowledged. Their voices were invited to add to the dialogue but not (at least initially) to change the conversation. But the voices were too strong to stay confined in the thinking of the time and ended up pushing many with them to a

of the issue of identity that so clouds our horizons today is not a smoke screen that effectively veils issues of well-being, dignity, self-sufficiency, self-respect, economic security, etc.

hooks describes a writing class where black students were encouraged to write using a stereotypically black language. "It seemed that many black students found our situations problematic precisely because our sense of self, and by definition our voice, was not unilateral, monologist, or static but rather multi-dimensional." (hooks, 1989, pg. 11-12) recognition of needing a new approach.

I believe that much of the literature on Native education (I discuss this in the next chapter) continues to focus on the subcategorization within the existing framework of categories. What was the broad stroke of the paintbrush simplifying the complexity of Indians becomes many small strokes, each clearly identifying groups like the Cree, the Anishinabe, the Maliseet or even further to the Woodland Cree, the Plains Cree, the James Bay Cree, the Swampy Cree.

Chow (1993), with the help of Sakai, argues that the currently popular particularism is but a new version of the universalism that precedes it. The focus on who, exactly, someone is talking about or trying to locate the particular splash of paint within the mosaic becomes the prime concern. But trying to rid ourselves of the broad and inaccurate picture painted by the large brushes by focusing our attention on the intricacies of the smaller brush strokes still leaves our attention on the painting instead of the painter, the context of the painting and its motivation.

Jean is an example of the diversity that challenges the conceptualizations. Her grandparents were not status Indians and therefore were forced off the reserve. She is a status Indian but does not desire to live on the reserve where she holds band membership. I know of Métis people who have identified themselves with that group only to find themselves designated status Indians through the passage of Bill C-31. There are more variations to the themes that make the themes unsustainable conceptions.

The ultimate subcategorization is a return to the individual.

"Like any common living thing, I fear and reprove classification and the death it entails, and I will not allow its clutches to lock down on me, although I realize I can never lure myself into simply escaping it. The difference, as I sense it, is: naming, like a cast of the die, is just one step toward unnaming, a tool to render visible what he (sic) has carefully kept invisible in his manipulative blindness. I never really start or end the trial process; I persist. Constantly changing my point of departure and arrival, I trace, void, retrace with the desire to baffle rather than bring out contours. Some lines, some curves may emerge, whose totality will always differ. The further I persevere, the more liable I am to let myself be riddled by doubts." (Trinh Minh-ha, 1989, pg. 48)

Who decides?

The second issue I want to discuss concerning essentialism is who decides on the properties of the category and therefore determines the membership.

Often times, though I believe decreasingly so, it is the centre that reserves the right to name the margins. Chow (1993) talks of being on a selection committee for a specialist in Chinese language and literature. An American Marxist accused one of the candidates of capitalist leanings because of the plurality wîya presented in wîya's reading of the text. Wîya did not fit into the committee member's expectation of what a communist 'ethnic specimen' ought to be. In this case, it was the committee member who defined the essence, the range of suitability, of appropriate behaviour for someone with a specific identity.

"The fact is that the racial categories that purport to designate any of us are too rigid and oversimplified to fit anyone accurately. But then, accuracy was never their purpose." (Piper, 1994, pg. 246)

When I say decreasingly it is the 'us' who defines 'them', it is because I believe we are frequently sensitized to the overbearing assumptions that such labelling promotes. Chow's example does, however, point to the very subtle nature of the process at work, something wîya struggles with because it does not necessarily fit the meaning of the word 'racism' as we commonly understand it.

The fear of inappropriately labelling someone as 'Other' has led to a belief in a myth that only if you are 'one' can you recognize 'one'. It is as if there is "some mysterious and inchoate essence of blackness that only other blacks have the antennae to detect." (Piper, 1994, pg. 220)

Often the defining is left to the cultural elite who are seen as representatives of the masses:

> "The problem of essentializing gender, ethnicity, or race is that a culture (or a sex) is presented as a monolithic, self-contained and sexually stabilized identity. Being a member requires displaying the homogenizing characteristics of the cultural formation. Only members of the in-group, usually cultural intellectuals, those often furthest removed from the inherited traditions, are entrusted with the rights of representation." (Jagodzinski, unpublished manuscript, pg. 16)

There is a tokenism at work here. In recognizing differences, they are being framed within existing structures. The information required is specific and descriptive so representatives of the group are encouraged to provide this information to accurately fit their group into the frame. These representatives are often versed in the process of framing, often excellent political representatives of their group, often encouraging a positive framing (such as depacking binarisms and renaming issues), but the structure is often not questioned, the process is not exposed.

Jean speaks eloquently to the issue of who designates the categories when she describes the complexity of knowing who is an Indian and who is not. She reflects that if she can't know, how could the government possibly know? Her conclusion about it not mattering much I interpret as an invitation to move beyond.

Political correctness

Political correctness is but an inversion of the binarisms, a changing of

That the masses can potentially be represented is but another metanarrative, the one upon which our current political systems are based.

I remember my sense of understanding when I first read about how neo-colonialism worked by replacing the external colonialist with an internal representative of colonialist ideology.

the names but a keeping of the categories. Mercer (1990) points out how the official discourse against racism failed because it maintained a uni-dimensional view of racism. Tokenism became the hailing call of a new liberal attitude towards racial equality. But tokenism does nothing to address the structures at work, it just slots different people into them. The frustrations of these people towards their new impotent roles led to what Mercer describes as "'guilt-tripping' in which potential allies were paralysed by the sins of their past." (Ibid, pg. 67). The cycle of anger, guilt and resentment led to the careful interacting between groups that we have come to know as political correctness. Mercer bemoans the fact that groups were not able to move beyond their differences, agree to disagree on some issues and forge forward in new alliances none-the-less. Instead, the careful manoeuvring has become stifling to the very causes it had hoped to promote.

Isolationism

A natural progression of the emphasis on essentialized identities is a move towards isolating groups from one another. I have spoken previously about boundaries that the dominant society puts around itself to protect itself from the margins. The emphasis on essentialized identities encourages the margins to also isolate themselves, particularly politically.

Paradoxically, this isolationist position is refuted from within what could be seen as an essentialized cosmology of Native interconnectedness:

> "A stance of isolation, while a seemingly logical strategy to avoid non-native interference, would be

I now realize that my frequent choice of the word Indian, above options such as First Nations or Cree or even Native, in this discussion is an act of defiance. I am reeling against the use of politically correct language because it evades what I perceive to be the real issues.

> "It is necessary to emphasize that the question of establishing a positive Indian identity does not mean political separatism - not yet, at least, not if the white man (sic) will agree to be reasonable - nor does it mean a desire to return to the days of yesteryear. The fact remains, however, that most Indians firmly believe their identity is tied up with treaty and aboriginal rights." (Cardinal, 1969, p. 24)

> almost impossible to maintain because the base of native reality is that spirit of interconnectedness of all living things. A system of isolation is totally contradictory to the life-force of being human, except in the world of politics and words. Most of us as native people would not choose to pull ourselves apart from humanity as a part of the circle of life. Yet, the reality of our Euro-Canadian experience is that Canadian institutions do not reflect equality and respectful co-existence of societies." (Weber-Pillwax, 1992, pg. 7-8)

In the last chapter, I spoke of borders and boundaries. Essentializing keeps us in this space. Though new fences may be built, we are still living within a geographic metaphor that is based on limited space with shifting ownership. I consider this a two dimensional perspective and wonder what a third dimension would add.

BEYOND ESSENTIALISM

"It is still unusual to encounter instances where theory involved the voiding, rather than the affirming or even reiterating, of theoretical categories." (Trinh Minh-ha, 1989, pg. 42)

Mercer (1990) envisions a new way of looking beyond essences. Wiya talks of everyone's intuitive knowledge that metanarratives can no longer explain the complexity we live within. "We don't need another hero." (pg. 50). How we understood differences in the past can no longer be coded or programmed into existing formulas, such as the old racism or the new, politically correct, racism.

> "In sociological terms, this means a recognition of the fragmentation of traditional sources of authority and identity, the displacement of collective sources of membership

> and belonging such as 'class' and 'community' that help to construct political loyalties, affinities and identifications." (Ibid, pg. 50)

A new plurality emerges, conceptions of identity no longer being static but rather shifting, multiple, fragmented. This is the waves of the earth quake to which I referred to the waves on Pratt's (1984) mill pond, ever circling.

Mohanty (1991) speaks of thinking in 'imagined communities' instead of essential identity groups. By using imagination rather than fixed descriptions, the groups are not forced into a rigid framework which might focus the attention on internal dissention and away from other processes. It is a way of working together as a group of diverse yet unified people. This is how I see the mâmawonanâtawihow'kamik group functioning.

Old issues do not melt away but continue to challenge me to look at them differently. There are two that I want to examine here: racism and authenticity.

Racism revisited

In Piper's (1994) article entitled Passing for white, passing for black, wîya talks about how people seem to need to designate wîya in a racial category. Wîya's appearance does not easily place wîya in the black category that Piper identifies with. This 'passing' has brought wîya into situations where others have had difficulty placing wîya in their conceptual maps of the world pertaining to racial classification. Wîya describes the comments and actions that people use to try to locate wîya in the rigid confines of someone's racial

Blacks and other marginalized groups fear the decentring of the essentialized notions because they have struggled so long to create self-worth within them.

> "[M]any of us are extremely resistant ... once again casting ourselves into the same chaos of ethnic and psychological ambiguity our diaspora to this country originally inflicted on us." (Piper, 1994, pg. 234)

stereotype. Piper talks of the disillusionment associates feel, as if betrayed, when wîya let's it slip that wîya's cultural affiliation is black. Wîya had been privy to conversations and interactions that were assumed to be among a homogeneous group of whites. When they have discovered otherwise, they feel betrayed, as if wîya has seen a vulnerable side of them that they do not normally expose to someone of a different race.

Piper sees racism even among the liberal minded for we are all living in a racist society. Wîya's test of the repudiation of racism has moved beyond anyone's willingness to 'do' something on behalf of black people. Wîya sees as significant the response to the possibility of 'being' a member of the out group. Racism, if it exists, becomes a "hatred of the self as identified with the other; that is, as self-hatred projected onto the other" (Ibid, pg. 233).

The existence of reverse racism confirms this notion.

Piper's conclusions are most interesting. I quote wîya at length:

> "The fact of the matter is that if racism is present, which it is in *all* of us, black as well as white, who have been acculturated into this racist society, it will emerge despite our best efforts at concealment. The question should not be whether any individual is racist; that we all are to some extent should be a given. The question should be, rather, how we handle it once it appears. I believe our energy would be better spent on creating structured, personalized community forums for naming, confronting, owning and resolving these feelings rather than trying to evade, deny, or suppress them." (Piper, 1994, pg. 243-4)

Racism, in all its forms, is ugly. We have tried to overcome it and found ourselves entrenched deeper in a labyrinth of political correctness just as medical research often cures one virus to find that the solution has created another problem in its place. I think what Piper is suggesting is a refreshingly new approach, a new vision of living in a racist society, owning racism, and then moving with and through and against and over and around it.

Authenticity: Will the 'real' Indian please sit down

I have noticed that Native things are in vogue. At the fabric store, the Navaho print motif is displayed in front. I pick up a catalogue and find several pages featuring 'Native' items such as feather-shaped earrings and raven-printed T-shirts. The Montagnais duo, Kashtin, blare their music from my CBC tuned radio on Canada Day.

Between the years 1986 and 1991, census Canada reported a dramatic increase in people claiming aboriginal heritage from 711,720 to 1,002,675 (see Appendix 2). The magnitude of this jump can be partially explained by the changes in the Indian Act allowing women who married non-Indians and their descendants to have their treaty rights restored. However, this cannot fully explain the dramatic increase. I believe that the category has lost some of its negative connotation and therefore people are more willing to associate themselves.

The aftermath of the popularization of all things Native is that authenticity, if it ever existed in the first place, becomes even more obscured. I have seen this issue more often than not portrayed in a

I think here again of Foucault's words: "My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous" (quoted in Sawicki, 1988, pg. 166).

In the 70s it was yoga, in the 90s, it's Native spirituality - our society's quest for spiritual connection. These trends often bring forward the most superficial qualities. I have listened to people at the mâmawonanâtawihow'kamik talk about the false prophets, the false gurus/elders, the wannabes.

quest for Indian heritage as a proof of authenticity. I call this phenomenon 'looking for an ounce of Indian blood'. Whitecoyote's (1994) poem Ode to Wannabe shows the significance placed on 1/256th blood descent as an inappropriate factor in claiming identity.

Piper (1994) points out the inconsistency of the blood definitions. Indians in the United States must be at least 1/8th aboriginal descent to receive legal status as Indians and enjoy the financial benefits and entitlements. For black people, there is a law on the books that says that anyone with one-drop of African blood is characterized as black.

> "So according to this long-standing convention of racial classification, a white who acknowledges any African ancestry implicitly acknowledges being black--a social condition, more than an identity, that no white person would voluntarily assume, even in imagination." (Ibid, pg. 232)

Wîya's reference to 'social condition' rather than 'identity' is, I believe, vital to an understanding of differing conceptions that I am presenting here. Wîya argues that the difference is clearly economic. Having Indian status leaves a financial burden upon the state and therefore is more difficult to assert by the blood rules. Being black suggests being of a lower socio-economic status.

Blood lines have been given a significant role in the allocation of Indian status in Canada so it is not surprising that they would be the hailing cry of those seeking to associate themselves with the fashionable.

Kristeva (1991) speaks of 'jus soli' and 'jus sanguinis' as the laws defining foreigners. I have spoken in the last chapter of the definition of Indians being related to occupying a certain land or, in Kristeva's expression of 'jus soli' being identified with the law of the soil. In this chapter I have talked about the importance in blood (jus sanguinis) in our definitions of others. I met an Indian who rejects both of these perspectives. Wîya speaks of actions and attitudes as defining who is an Indian and who is not. I have heard what wîya said echoed by another Indian who talked to me about the Cree word for Indian 'îyinew' meaning 'someone who is at one with the world' or, according to a Cree dictionary "an Indian, a man [sic], one of the human race" (Watkins and Faries, 1938). To wîya's way of knowing, wîya told me that a Tibetan monk could well be an Indian.

I pointed out Willow's search for her Indian heritage. I described this search as not a predominant force in self-identity. These are some of the teachings I have received from the mâmawonanâtawihow'kamik, how what has appeared to be the dominant society's definitions of the category of Indian and Native can be transcended.

The issue of authenticity, beyond blood, remains. Whitecoyote (1994) is rather discerning in wîya's designation of Indian authenticity in wîya's descriptions in the right column above. Nevertheless, of the seven people wîya describes, wîya's conclusions about three of them involve no reference to their Indianness. My conclusions look much the same. Though I recognize Stuart and Jean as Indian and Carl and Lin as non-Indians, for the other three I reserve judgement. Alex would see herself as an Indian, Willow not, and Marguerite, I don't know. Jean would tell me that it doesn't matter. The point that I am making is that it all depends upon the perspective one takes. There is fluidity and movement in different groupings of people and identity for varying purposes.

The authenticity crisis can create an opportunity to move beyond, to transcend (as I suggested Willow has done). How this can happen I illustrate through an example concerning the famous speech by Chief Seattle which environmentalists have carried as their standard (Appendix 3). Kaiser's (1987) careful research into the origin of the popular environmental version questions its authenticity. The original association of Chief Seattle, a verifiable historical personage, with the famous speech began when a Dr. Smith took notes at a reception for the new Indian Commissioner in about 1853 (not at the

Author's who fictionalize real people often pick names for their characters that contain symbolic references. This is true of my work also, but there is only one I wish to share and that is Willow's. One of the teachings I have received about willows concerns their ability to bend but not break in the strong winds and storms of life. Their flexibility does not shift their rootedness. This is how I see w/Willow. When I told her this, she smiled a knowing smile and said something vague about the willow being of spiritual significance to her which confirmed my intuitive knowledge.

I cannot make this decision because of the way the categories are constructed.

treaty signing of Point Elliot in 1855 to which it is frequently attributed). In 1887, Smith published wîya's reconstruction of the speech from wîya notes in a local newspaper in the region. This version was translated from it's 'Victorian English' by Arrowsmith in 1969. Subsequently, the confusion takes hold. Arrowsmith lent wîya's version of the speech to Perry, a script writer working on a film about pollution for the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission. Perry fictionalized a speech based on the original for the purposes of the film and in recognition of the views of its sponsors, inadvertently leaving the reference of the source of wîya's ideas on wîya's own script. Perry's version changes the world view creating an ecological foundation for the speech. This research seems to indicate that the popularized version of the speech was written by a white for a specific environmental purpose.

Sinclair talks about the irony of the speech's apparent role in representing Native cosmology:

> "'The words of the speech have touched the hearts of many,' she comments. 'They express what is important in native beliefs. But let's face it. It's been the white man [sic] who has needed them written. Native history is mostly oral. Words seem dead once written down. It's ironic that the speech was written by a white man, then altered to serve white man's new found awareness of the earth, and finally refuted by a white man.'" (Adams quoting Sinclair, 1993, pg. 17)

Throughout this work, I have spoken of my need to address the white

Perry also changes the conception of God in wîya's version, suggesting the thinking of a century later about the wisdom of Indian chiefs. Smith's version reads: "'Your God loves your people and hates mine; ... he [sic] has forsaken his red children; ... The white man's God cannot love his red children ...'". Perry's version reads: "'Our God is the same God. ... He [sic] is the God of man, and His compassion is equal for the red man and the white.'" (Ibid, pg. 516)

Sinclair, who is also a personal friend, would call this "owning your own shit".

construction of Native, the centre's designation of 'other', to examine these issues from my location as a white academic. I keep returning to this theme of talking of the 'other' when I'm really talking about myself. This is Sinclair's irony. This is, I believe, the most important reflection I can make about Native education.

I don't want to leave this discussion before I deal with an issue that has been burning at my consciousness. In 1969, the Canadian government wrote the White Paper which basically suggested that the designation of Indian should be abandoned and Indians should be fully integrated into mainstream society. This was the culmination of years of policy hoping to assimilate Indians, propagating the myths of the disappearing Indian that I discussed in the last chapter. The response to this intended federal initiative was the vehement opposition of Indian organizations across the country. It's written form is most notably expressed in Cardinal's treatise entitled Unjust Society. Within four years, the government had completely reversed it's position and implemented the suggestion of Indian control of Indian education put forth by the National Indian Brotherhood.

The reason I want to bring up this policy is that what I am arguing for here may well be confused with the position presented in the White Paper. It is not. The White Paper was a political position paper aimed at dissolving the federal government's responsibility for Indian affairs. My interruption of the social construction of Indian is, I believe, a social comment as much as a political one. I am nowhere suggesting that categories should be or even could be dissolved or dismantled, rather I am examining what they have to say about ourselves and trying to envision other ways of seeing things.

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1 The lyrics of this song are copyrighted. To maintain the anonymity of the lyricist, she is not named. Any desire to use this material can be directed to the lyricist through the author.

CHAPTER 5

CONSTRUCTING 'NATIVE' IN THE TEXT

INTRODUCTION

In my growing awareness of the social construction of phenomena, I have wanted to look at the literature on Native education to see how it has constructed 'Native'. In particular, I wanted to see how some of the themes that emerged in this construction in me might play themselves out in the literature, themes such as: disappearing Indians, imaginary Indians, lacking, needing an 'Other'. I look to this endeavour first as confirmation or refutation of what I have observed through my experiences and secondly because of the continuing power of the written word in shaping the myths by which we all live. The third significance of this examination is its implication as foundational to conceptions of 'Native education'. Reviewing assumptions, particularly covert ones, is an exercise of re-visioning or seeing anew.

This emphasis on the written word as a creative force came to me through my reading of postmodernist literature which sees everything as text or discourse. Parker defines discourse as "a system of statements which constructs an object" (1992, pg. 5). Whether there is a material reality upon which discourses are drawn or not is unimportant to this analysis. What interests me is their creative, constitutive, perpetuating abilities.

Said suggests that disciplines/ discourses begin to take on a life of their own. Wīya speaks of holding a '*textual* attitude' suggesting it is a human failing to draw on the simplified authority of a text rather than to deal

There is a definitive difference in the ways written and spoken words of others are incorporated in this text. I thought at one time of bracketing the oral contributors' names following their ideas much as I do for the texts I refer to. Instead, my attempt to draw these two closer together has been in the reference list in which I begin with a list of some of the oral contributors; placed here instead of in an acknowledgement section.

with the complexity of direct encounters with human beings. Two things reinforce this stance: first, that textual references help people deal with new, unknown and possibly threatening encounters and second, textual reliance appears to be successful as a self-fulfilling prophecy. In many cases the text is believed to hold greater authority than the actuality it describes.

I believe that the field of study we have come to know as 'Native education' or, in some cases 'Indian education' is a social construction. A body of text or a discourse has emerged and is identifiable. I have chosen a representative work to examine in greater detail, namely Barman, Hébert and McCaskill's (1987) Indian Education in Canada. I know of this text through course work in the area. It is a widely circulated, edited book containing twelve articles on a myriad of topics under the rubric of Indian education (see appendix 4 for a list of the table of contents). I am choosing it as representative because of its depth and breadth.

My concern in examining this work is with the "representations", particularly of "Native" or "Indian": what is being talked about, what is not said, how are things discussed, how am I (the reader) positioned in relation to the text, how is the text interwoven with other discourses, etc. What can I draw from these observations to help me see the social construction of this 'Other'? How can I make meaning from these awarenesses? More than just unveiling a shrouded mythology which might pervade a seemingly rigorously objective oeuvre, I want to hint at becoming aware from our current conceptions of difference with all their stereotyping, myths, prejudices and fear.

authority = 'author'ity

Fields of study are also created, they are not natural (Said, 1979). It is interesting to note that there is no equivalent study of 'white education.'

I could just as easily have chosen 12 articles from the Canadian Journal of Native Education.

My text to date is already indicative of the things that I am looking for in this analysis. How much of my endeavour is self-fulfilling prophecy?

Working with a colleague on a presentation that interrupts the social construction of 'student', I found myself asking her the purpose of our activity. She responded by telling me that we are interrupting it because it is and needs to be interrupted to free people from its

But before I embark on this analysis, I wish to again approach the methodology issue to make apparent my process in this endeavour.

ANOTHER WORD ON METHODOLOGY

My initial theoretical understanding of discourse analysis talked of looking for the covert meanings, the implications behind the words of a discourse. I would look for explicit references but more importantly try to discern the implicit ones. How exactly I would approach this daunting task beyond intuitive reckoning did not become clear to me until I discovered Parker's (1992) book entitled Discourse Dynamics: Critical Analysis for Social and Individual Psychology. In it, wîya presents ten criteria for distinguishing discourses which each include two steps (See appendix 5 for a list and my reflections on wîya's suggested processes).

I began reading the articles in the Indian education text after which I would reflect on Parker's various steps for each paper. Before long, certain categories emerged as containing more of my pertinent reflections and others became quickly redundant. I eventually narrowed it down to four: how the article positioned me, its reader; questions of author/ity and intertext; the objects being described; and discourse as words and words as signifiers. My first draft of this chapter maintained these categories rigorously. But I found that as items of analysis emerged, they crossed boundaries. The subtitle in each section limited the discussion allowing me only one context or approach at a time. The discussion became stifled because it could not draw on the whole text. I had created artificial boundaries that became so bounds. I kept insisting on a further purpose, some sort of conclusion that would capture the raison d'être of our work. We concluded that there was no conclusion for there is no alternative we are suggesting, no new metanarrative we desire to put in its place. All we are advocating is an awareness which we believe will shift things.

Sarup's definition of deconstruction:

> "This is a method of reading a text so closely that the author's conceptual distinctions on which the text relies are shown to fail on account of the inconsistent and paradoxical use made of these very concepts within the text as a whole." (1990, p. 37)

rigid, I could not move.

It was during a break, a time away from the text, away from the process of writing, when I found myself entertaining the idea of challenging the categories I had created. It felt like a daring idea involving risk. I questioned what the threat appeared to be and found standing before me the false god of 'intellectual rigour'. I had somehow believed that having chosen Parker's book for the basis of my analysis, I needed to stay true to the letter of wîya's form as well as intent. I had used wîya's form to find my points of analysis and I was grateful for the tools it provided but the tools are no longer visible once the building is complete. To build my chapter, I needed the tools but it was the material (my analysis derived by using the tools) that I would need to present. The material coming together would bring my discussion to fruition.

I realize that this leaves the process of building, my use of the tools on the material, invisible to the reader. My intellectual rigour is not explicitly presented, only the result is displayed upon which I build my discussion.

I have dropped my four areas of analysis in favour of nine areas of discussion, many of them issues that resurface from their initial introduction in the section of how 'Native' is constructed in me.

ANALYSIS

'Indians' are different

This text would not exist if there were not a category called 'Indian' which is in some way different therefore

I speak of 'drawing on the whole text' as if it is a unity. It is not. It is twelve separate articles bound together in a collection. I do, however, for purposes of research suggest that these separate articles constitute a representation of the body of thought known as 'Indian education'. My reference to the text as a whole is really a reference to 'Indian education' as a whole discipline.

The metaphor of 'construction' and 'deconstruction' still leaves us in a 'material' realm.

I find myself reluctant to use this title "Analysis" because of its suggestive connotations related to mechanistic scientific experimental methodology (data is *analyzed* and then discussed to assist in developing further theory). I find myself intertwining the discussion in need of special attention through a field of study and a discourse. I wondered how the text would create this difference but I found that it spoke so exclusively of 'Indians' that there was no comparative inherent in the text. What I did discover was the contributors were both Indian and non-Indian and therefore how they were described differently gave me a place in which to do some contrasting.

In the "Notes on Contributors", I am introduced to the authors of the articles in this edited tome. My reading finds seven of the fifteen designated as Indian. This is most often the first thing said about these people such as "a member of the Turtle Clan of the Mohawk Nation, Grand River Territory" (Barman, Hébert and McCaskill, 1987, pg. 252) or "a Southern Ojibway" (Ibid, pg. 251) or "a member of the Raven Clan of the Nisga'a Nation, living on the Greenville Reserve" (Ibid, pg. 252) or "Chief of the Rupert House Band, was Grand Chief of the Grand Council of the Crees (of Quebec)" (Ibid, pg. 251). This is in contrast to the other authors who are introduced premising their university position as in "assistant professor of Language education at the University of Calgary" (Ibid, pg. 251) or "professor and chairman of the Department of Native Studies at Trent University" (Ibid, pg. 252) or their research acumen with these words "co-investigator in the Canadian Childhood History project" (Ibid, pg. 251) or "has undertaken case studies of Indian-controlled schools in Alberta and British Columbia" (Ibid). The second most likely thing to be said about the Native authors is that they have educational credentials, for example "holds a M.Ed. from the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education" (Ibid, pg. 252) or "[w]ith an M.Ed. in Educational Administration with the analysis as a way of obscuring the boundary.

I am assuming that the seven who are identified as 'Indian' are the only ones who are. Some of the other eight authors may well also be 'Indian' but are simply not acknowledged as such. I feel rather assured in this assumption given the premises of the text yet I also question my confidence given my own arguments in this work.

The "Notes on Contributor's" introduction of Diamond is drawn directly from wîya's article in which wîya begins: "[i]n my experience as Chief of the Rupert House Band, Grand Chief of the Grand Council of the Crees (of Quebec) and chairman of the Cree School Board, I..." (Diamond, 1987, pg. 86). This self-referencing is different than the other authors who are 'spoken about' being represented by the editors. How are our self-representations different from those projected upon us by others?

from the University of British Columbia" (Ibid). The attainment of a university degree was only ever mentioned for the explicitly Indian authors.

This difference in how Indian authors are introduced is suggestive of a viewpoint or framework in which Indians are positioned in the text. First of all, though this text is an academic piece, premised above academic achievements is one's membership in the category 'Indian' as an authority on Indian education. I attribute this importance to the tokenism of which I have spoken earlier, the desire to include the previously excluded in the existing forms of discourse. This does, of course, not necessarily change the discourse. That educational credential was the second most significant descriptor of the 'Indian' authors might be suggestive that they have passed the test of membership in this elite group, they have undergone the academicizing process involved in attaining a university degree. For one of the 'Others' to enter into this discourse, they must be sufficiently disciplined through the academic process to write an appropriate text for inclusion.

Essences revisited

The introduction is very sure in its portrayal of Indian culture as "distinct". It recognizes "Indian values, identity, language and traditions" (Barman, Hébert, and McCaskill, 1987, pg. 2) and though these vary, the existence of this distinct category is never questioned or even presented as problematic.

Diamond (1987) sets up the contrast between Indians and non-Natives distinctiveness in wîya's opening remarks. Indians/ Natives/Crees are "in a very *unique* situation" (my emphasis,

Said (1979) suggests that Orientalism is so very pervasive that it affects the work of both Occidental and Oriental authors of Orientalism. Likewise, I continue to view the tome as a unitary piece without distinction between those works authored by Indian writers and those by others.

When I received the program for a conference in which I will be co-presenting a paper, I was astounded at my recognition of many of the names of the other presenters. I have read their works and see them as intellectually far in advance of my own working/presenting. I was suddenly overwhelmed with feelings of insecurity, of fear at entering into a forum with which my familiarity was limited. I was reminded by friends that they are people too. My sense of hierarchy pervaded.

Then I remembered being in at an indigenous camp with the job of approaching people to get their addresses. An elder came to me saying he had observed my hesitation in approaching some people. When I reflected on this hesitancy, I realized that I was slow to approach the elders and chiefs for they were, in my mind, higher in the hierarchy and far too busy with important matters to want to bother with me. I observed them carefully and quickly discovered that they were also concerned with mundane realities like whether the washrooms had toilet paper or the children played in safety. The distancing had been only in my mind.

Ibid, pg. 86) ... Wîya contrasts perspectives of education as absolutes:

> "For non-Natives, 'Indian education' simply means the adaptation of Indians to a school system and pedagogical regime which has been created by a different culture to fulfil its own needs and aspirations. Natives, however, do not see it that way" (Ibid).

Further, wîya contrasts the "south" with the "north" to set up the polar opposites of Native/non-Native. Wîya is explicit in acknowledging distinctive difference: "we needed to have *special* powers, functions, goals and objectives ... to set up a board with extensive, *unique*, and pervasive powers" (my emphasis, Ibid, pg. 89) or later "the activities of the Cree school board are *unique* and required *special* arrangements and funding" (my emphasis, Ibid, pg. 91).

Battiste (1987) provides another example of essentializing framing it in differing "epistemological ideologies" (Ibid, pg. 107) and "different structures of Mi'kmaq thought and literacy" (Ibid, pg. 108). Wîya explains that "to establish a school on the reserve ... would recognize the epistemological differences of non-Indian and Mi'kmaq world views and the different means of acquiring them." (Ibid, pg. 118). Western knowledge is considered a "new paradigm ... man-made, incremental and segmented, heirarchially divided, and ever-changing" (Ibid, pg. 111).

Longboat reflects these two distinct categories early in wîya's article:

> "The needs and cultures of the Indian nations led to one

I am particularly struck in this representation by the word "ever-changing" because, by implication, Mi'kmaq culture is seen as not "ever-changing", as static.

> philosophy of education; those of the European settlers led to a very different one. The two views continue to clash in today's struggle for control over education in Indian communities. The widely differing modern philosophies--the Western traditional, closely tied to the economic and class structure, and the First Nations philosophy, bound to traditional worldviews--are in a power struggle." (1987, pg. 22-3)

Interesting use of 'traditional' associated with 'Western'.

The distinct, traditional culture concept used in these texts operates in contrast to the dominant or mainstream culture. Douglas speaks of the "[s]eperate realities of native people and mainstream society" (1987, pg. 181). The distinction is further created by references to being bi-cultural, a framing several of the authors encourage. Diamond contrasts these two by suggesting that "we can adapt to the living standard of a modern industrial society, or we may cling to a woodland or more traditional culture" (1987, pg. 87) and asks why it is necessary to choose. Wīya speaks about choosing the best of both worlds but they are seen as two very different worlds.

Sollors (1986) talks about how often one region is compared not to another region but to a whole leading to a forced homogenization of both groups.

References to "biculturalism" and "bilingualism" are suggestive of a duality between all that is Indian and all that is not. They are neatly positioned by this phrase: "bicultural identities, with an identity firmly anchored in the traditional cultural world of their people and a consciousness of the skills necessary to succeed in dominant society." (Barman, Hébert and McCaskill, 1987, pg. 5). Rarely is the duality as neat and clean as suggestive in this text. Let me draw on a linguistic example from my learning of the Cree language.

My Cree tutor, a local man, was telling me about the two ways to say tea: 'maskihkiwapoy' or, in slang, 'leté'. My French is strong enough to recognize the latter as a French derivative of "le thé" or 'the tea'. My tutor found this rather amusing knowing of the French influence in this area in the last century. Languages are just one area of interaction. How cultures, traditions, world views, and epistomologies are continually shifting and moving through everyday interactions is more difficult to ascertain.

Little has the purity with which it is inscribed. Who is 'Indian' and who is not I have already problematized. This book makes mention only of its exclusion of "Métis or Inuit education or pre-contact and adult education" (Barman, Hébert and McCaskill, 1987, preface). It could therefore neatly place most 'Native' people without Indian status in the category of Métis. Most of the articles speak of education on reserves where the focus is on status Indians. Some of the latter articles address urban issues so the language switches to 'Native' education. How 'Indian' one is or how 'Native' is never an issue, it is an either/or category, a duality with distinct borders that are never obscured.

The emphasis on distinctiveness is also suggestive of a homogeneity of culture. There is talk of traditional culture involving sun dances, sweatlodge ceremonies, fasting, potlatches, and spiritual healing rituals. As I mentioned in my earlier discussion of essences, there is often more diversity within a group than between it and other groups. On the issue of spirituality, there is hardly a uniform approach as can be seen in the rise in numbers of members of fundamental Christian sects living on reserves.

Rooted to the land

McKay and McKay introduce the Nisga'a people early in their text through a description of the land including it's location, climate, and geographical features. These physical location references are not surprising given the geographical importance in the definitions of Indian I presented in a previous chapter.

Most of the articles in this text talk of life on reserves as if this is the only location of Indians. There are, of course, exceptions in the mentioning of 'off-reserve' Indians. For example, McKay and McKay talk of the Nisga'a Nation being 4000, 3000 of which live on the reserve and 1000 in urban communities and Diamond speaks of "Cree residents outside of the Cree communities" (Ibid, pg. 94). The education of these other people are either not talked about or hinted at in passing.

Location is connected to traditional culture. McCaskill frequently contrasts the Indian cultural survival schools that are located in urban areas with those in rural areas, suggesting that the latter are closer to the traditional culture.

Is the traditional Indian disappearing or being revitalized?

The word 'traditional' is suggestive of this distinct 'Other' culture appearing in phrases such as "[i]n traditional Indian societies, education of the young took place informally ..." (Barman, Hébert and McCaskill, 1987, pg. 3). The past is often referenced in this way, as instructive to the present but something

How do I reference the rise in number of fundamental Christian adherents on reserves when it is something I hear talked about but I know of no legitimizing research?

And what of the 'wannabe' emerging elders? Are they traditional or not?

I do not know the total number of 'Indians' living on reserves in contrast to those living 'off reserve'. I do know that a 1980 report suggested that there were 30,000 Indians living in Edmonton (cited in Douglas, 1987). I seem to have heard (where, I no longer recall) a more recent figure of 60,000 in Edmonton at the time of this writing. That is 60,000 in a city of 600,000 or one in ten.

How much am I simplifying things to suggest that the text focuses so much on reservation life? There is one article exclusively on 'Urban Native Children' and another that talks of the cultural survival schools in both rural and urban settings. Again, I am struck by my process of needing to make broad generalizations for analytical purposes and thereby losing the nuances.

now gone.

It is seen as so far gone that few remember in Battiste's text "[a]boriginal Mi'kmaq hieroglyphics were introduced to the primary 3 grades in the context of their historical customary usage of remembering prayers, *a skill parents had long thought lost*" (my emphasis, 1987, pg. 120). Even local people saw the culture as disappearing.

But McCaskill's article entitled Revitalization of Indian culture: Indian cultural survival schools speaks of the revitalization of the culture. To do this, wîya moves out of the view of culture exclusively as material objects such as beads and feathers.

> "In its broadest sense, culture is everything, material and non-material, learned and shared by people as they come to terms with their environment. It includes the totality of a group's shared procedures, belief systems, worldview, values, attitudes, and perceptions of life" (McCaskill, 1987, pg. 155)

How can there be a revitalization for how can this coming to terms with the environment have stopped? How can a traditional culture based in past environmental circumstances have any relevance to the existing times that it has not already brought to the present? Somehow, the adaptation of the procedures and belief systems to the unfolding present is seen as inadequate or inappropriate, in need of a firmer foundation from the past. This returns me to the topic of 'lack' which seems to inherently pervade discussion of 'Native'.

Since I am told in these articles that the disappearing Indian is being revitalized, I am want to ask how something can be revitalized if it was not assumed to be almost dead.

I have heard aboriginal feminists talk of the revitalization movement not going back far enough, remembering only the time of early Christian influence when women began to be seen as 'less than' instead of returning to the 'equal but different' gender perspective of the long ago. Who determines what is 'traditional' in the revitalization movement when culture is a moving and shifting dynamic? Which point in history is drawn upon to inform the present?

'Lacking'

The Indian portrayed in this text is continually seen as missing something, in need of something extra or different. These imply an inherent 'lack' that creates a need. Just about every article brought up 'lack' in one form or another. I bring a variety of examples to show the variety of manifestations of this phenomenon.

Williams and Wyatt portray the younger generation as 'without': "These are people who face life without a past, without language, and without a culture" (1987, pg. 211).

Douglas twice posits the need for "Urban Life Skills" for the Native families involved in Sacred Circle project somehow assuming that these families are new to the urban environment and have not learned how to live in it appropriately according to some set of standards that a course in urban life skills could enlighten them about.

'Urban Life Skills' sounds like a contemporary name of what was 'Mother's Day Out' 20 years ago. Both are laden with value judgements about a right way and a wrong way, in this case, of living in the city. Who establishes the values by which such things are measured?

The notion of 'lack' further comes through in McKay and McKay's article in this sentence "It is this perception of the whole child that is needed if one is to unlock and unravel the learning difficulties of children" (1987, pg. 64). No previous mention was made that 'learning difficulties' were an issue or a concern but it seems that talk of Indian children assumes talk of learning difficulties.

Of course the academic portrays the "Other" as lacking, he or she must fulfil a role for him/herself, that of fulfiller of the empty space he/she has created.

The need for a sentence such as this: "Our language is in no way intrinsically inferior to any other and is in no way incapable of development for meeting the needs of the twentieth century." (McKay and McKay, 1987, pg. 80) is indicative of how deeply entrenched the notion of 'lack' has become. The accusation is defended before it is made.

When presenting the two primary issues facing band-controlled schools, the introduction quickly turns to the need for "leadership of Indian educators with post-graduate training" (Barman, Hébert and McCaskill, 1987, pg. 8). This is a striking example of how the institution of higher education is reinforced by this discourse. Only those with credentials from such institutions are considered leaders able to grapple with philosophical issues (as defined by these academic authors) pertaining to Indian education.

In talking of a new school board for a band-controlled school, McKay and McKay suggest that "the major challenge will be to design a structure with *additional* features" (my emphasis, Ibid, pg. 80), again suggesting that something is different/missing. This same sentiment is reiterated in Diamond (1987).

'Lack' occurs when there is a norm against which something is measured and found wanting. These examples speak to me more of the norms than of realities. From this perspective, young people 'should' have a sense of history, there is a correct way to live in the city, children do not have difficulty learning in school settings, all languages are capable of developing to meet current demands, only those with post-graduate training are competent in educational leadership, and there is one set of features needed for school boards. When recounted in this fashion, the norms are easily seen for the myths they are and the house of cards crumbles.

I'm aware of my presentation style in this section. I make a point and then substantiate my argument with examples from the text as if to say, "Here, see, this is proof of what I was telling you in the last two chapters!" It's as if my autobiographical reflections are without validity until they are 'proved' through an examination of the literature.

The policy perspective

The most striking ingredient in this text is it's close ties with policy and administrative discourses. Of the twelve articles presented, three quarters (nine) make reference to government policy statements and half (six) make specific reference to the National Indian Brotherhood's (1972) document which became policy, "Indian Control of Indian Education".

There is talk of administrative control, legislative implications, financial responsibility, policy development and structure. Indeed, I could not imagine how the policy discourse would look very different from this academic one. This premising of the political/administrative discourse leaves one with conclusions such as Longboat's:

> "The place of the First Nations--within Canada or beside Canada--depends upon the outcome of future constitutional conferences, and on the development of both Canadian constitutional law and international law" (Ibid, pg. 30-1).

This suggests that the place of First Nations depends on Canada and not on First Nations. The multitude of factors involved in positioning First Nations are hereby condensed to political and legal realms responsive to external dynamics. This theme continues in Longboat's (1987) description of history. Wîya attributes the 1969 White Paper of the federal government with the "reawakening of a political consciousness" (Ibid, pg. 24) among Indian people. This view downplays political activity before this government initiative, possibly because it is only after this time that political activity

Urion on the academic discourse framework:

> "The only change that is possible in native culture is change that is reactive to non-Native dominance; that is, there is no quarter for the internal dynamics of First Nations culture to provide for change." (1991, pg. 4)

On the radio today the news broadcast told me of the Innu Nation not permitting access of provincial court representatives on their land thus refusing to accept Canadian legal authority. No longer will Innu people be tried in the Canadian legal system as they are now asserting their jurisdictional right to self-government. This did not happen as a result of meetings, negotiations, conferences, etc. by the Canadian government. This happened because the Innu Nation made it happen. They are actors in this drama, not passive bystanders.

manifested itself in a policy statement. The policy connection becomes a strong and overbearing one which diminishes the power of the First Nations and First Nations discourses.

History is presented elsewhere as a history of domination, imposition, assimilation and integration framed within a British/Canadian policy perspective. The existence of other perspectives are not presented or even acknowledged to exist. A phrase such as "elders and tribal historians were considered irrelevant in the education of Indian children" (Medicine, 1987, pg. 144) stems more from a policy perspective than a community one. Including it locates the reader within the former tradition of thought.

By connecting this discourse so closely with the policy discourse on Native Education, certain voices are included and excluded. The one that is included is suggestive of a power or force of imposition, of doing things a certain way. Other views are discounted or considered so unimportant they are not worthy of mention.

Let me show you the 'one' way

The text is written in a style speaking of assured knowledge, researched and now being reported. Rare are the tentative phrases of "it might be possible that" or "it is worth considering". Even areas of possible doubt are presented as given in sentences such as this: "While there is considerable agreement among aboriginal peoples about the necessity for Indian control, consensus on the nature of the experience itself--the substance of Indian education--is still in its formative stages." (Barman, Hébert and McCaskill, 1987, pg. 4). I'm left

Longboat (1987) clearly refers to the legal and political/policy discourses. But interesting enough, wîya also draws in the military discourse with a discussion of conquest, allies, surrender, defeat. Wîya's use of oppositional language sets a very confrontational stage.

with little room in which to wonder, to hear the other voices, let alone understand them.

Interpretations are presented as fact such as McKay and McKay's suggestion that it was "lack of awareness which led in part to the destruction of Native languages in the residential schools." (1987, pg. 79). I posit this as interpretation because of another widely espoused view that it was a deliberate policy of assimilation (not a 'lack of awareness') which led to the suppression of these languages in residential schools.

Concerning the single interpretations, I find myself concurring with Urion's words about academic discourse and First Nations discourse about education "one discourse usually ignored or trivialized the other" (1991, pg. 2). The strength of these single interpretations speak to me of an assuredness of truth and fact in which I no longer believe but rather see as a positioning of a body of knowledge in academia.

Urion (1991) rightly asks how the academic discourse can acknowledge the First Nations discourse without incorporating it.

Detached

These next two items of analysis are less about 'Native' and more about the construction of knowledge that has created concepts such as 'Native'. I am increasingly seeing my text approaching this latter subject and find these two items therefore very important to include.

The writing style of several of the articles detaches the author from the experiences described. McKay and McKay speak of themselves in third person until wîyas' conclusions. Williams and Wyatt (1987) present the student's perspective of a teacher training program in third person description, never alluding to individual student's experiences or their words about their experiences. I am invited to enter King's (1987) world as an armchair analyst appearing neutral yet overflowing with opinion and perspective. King discusses wîya's position in relation to wîya's topic at the end of a footnote at which point wîya mentions that despite having incorporated others' comments on the work, "it remains *my* description and analysis" (1987, pg. 63). Douglas (1987) describes the Sacred Circle Project in completely abstract terms making it very difficult for me to position wîya in relation to the text.

As an author, Longboat (1987) speaks in a neutral, disengaged vocabulary except for one slip in the text when wîya refers to "our" rights and the final section which is written almost exclusively in the first person plural. This last section, entitled "The Key to Our Future", speaks in a clearly positioned language that is hidden in the previous text. Here wîya makes assertions such as: "If we as Indian nations are going to build our systems, they must be based on and consistent with our traditional governments ..." (Ibid, pg. 40) and "Our people, and most particularly our children, are our most important resource" (Ibid, pg. 40). I contrast these statements with others from the main body of the text which speak in a detached manner: "First Nations communities must plan their special programmes on a year-to-year basis" (Ibid, pg. 36-7). "The Indian nations have chosen to see their right to control education as part of a more fundamental right to self-determination" (Ibid, pg. 30). These latter statements are equally positioned in content to the former.

With the exception of Diamond (1987) who writes exclusively in the first person, these pieces are predominantly authored in the abstract. Though their content is often laden with position and perspective, the use of objective, detached language draws attention away from the political implications.

It is interesting to note that the only articles that do use first person language at all (one totally and three in small portions) are written by "Indian" authors.

Just because you don't acknowledge your position, it doesn't mean you don't have one, it just means you don't acknowledge that you have one.

I can only reiterate my own wrestling with this issue of objectivity in the methodology chapter of this work. I no longer believe that knowledge is neutral and that objects can be studied with detachment.

Discourses as words and words as signifiers

I have found a few word usages that I find particularly indicative of certain viewpoints or perspectives. These few I have chosen to delve into in more depth.

"Indian control of Indian education" is an expression derived from the National Indian Brotherhood 1972 document of this title. Its frequent use throughout this text, but most notably in the introduction, as a focal point for the discussion on challenges needs to be examined more closely. The word *control* I find particularly intriguing. It's opposition suggests uncontrolled, uncontrollable, out of control. My thesaurus suggests the antonyms for control are freedom, obedience, and submission (Lewis, 1961). Freedom and control conjure up political manifestos and administrative/colonial powers.

In the introduction, reference is made to the natural environment: "An emphasis was placed on maintaining reciprocal relationships between the individual and the natural environment..." (Barman, Hébert and McCaskill, 1987, pg. 3). When I try to depack this word, its opposition is "unnatural" but I believe the hidden implication here is "civilized" contrasting culture/nature. I have spoken of binaries that lay greater value on the first word in the pair. This culture/nature debate is an old one in

I encountered a colleague who's vehement position was that Indian control of Indian education was the primary issue in Indian education. He saw few other relevant concerns such as standardized testing of Indian students, teacher education, language instruction, etc. I see him as having internalized the arguments presented by Barman, Hébert and McCaskill as to Indian control of Indian education as the most important "challenge" facing Indian education.

What would 'Indian freedom of Indian education' look like?

> "It is an illusion for me to believe that I can ever be fully present to you in what I say or write, because to use signs at all entails my meaning being always somehow dispersed, divided and never quite at one with itself. Not only my meaning, indeed, but I myself: since language is something I am made out of, rather than a convenient tool I use, the whole idea that I am a stable, unified entity must also be a fiction." (Sarup, 1990, p. 37)

Euro-centric philosophical discourse. It has largely shaped the positioning of 'Natives' as close to nature or metaphorically 'of nature'. Nature's pristine beauty is seen as disappearing through the advance of technology and likewise, our 'Indian' disappears again.

King presents the workings of a binarism to 'traditional' in an interesting statement: "While there is deep pride in Native heritage and there are complex, traditional interaction patterns, there is also a strong work ethic and individual success-achievement motivation" (1987, pg. 61). The suggestion that 'a strong work ethic' exists beyond the traditional Native heritage means that it is not included in the latter. Whose work ethic is being modeled here? I can only imagine the 'work' required to survive winters in this climate in the days before central heating, in clothing and feeding people, in gathering and preparing food and medicines for the sick, etc. A 'work ethic' is not a new, non-Indian phenomenon. The 'work ethic' as perceived at this time is related to punctuality, submission to authority, sacrifice, etc. Again, the norm being invoked becomes the arbitrary arbiter of truth.

McKay and McKay use an interesting expression describing the residential schools and then the boarding homes to which students were sent away as "an alien way of life" (1987, pg. 71). This talk of 'aliens' conjures up beings from other planets so very different that they are unrecognizable.

The last thing that is barely addressed is non-Indians. Douglas's description of the Sacred Circle Project talks about working both with Native and non-Native students and staff of the Edmonton Public School board yet the

An interesting note about words: 'alternative' could be read as 'alter/native' or 'changing native'.

latter is only mentioned. It is particularly absent from the title which implicates the project as being for "Urban Native Children". Barman, Hébert and McCaskill leave their mention of non-Indians to the last paragraph of their introduction where they lance the challenge of Indian education "beyond Indian peoples to all Canadians" (1987, pg. 17). I maintain that this work is less about 'Indians' than it is about non-Indians yet we are barely mentioned.

CONCLUSIONS

I wrestle with the purpose of this analysis. It seems no great surprise that I find the themes here for I have spent two chapters deliberating on them already. That they are now tied to 'Native education' feels like a legitimizing exercise.

I am reminded by Said's (1979) work as to the relevance of this demystifying of texts. Wîya's treatise on how academia constructed the Orient to the West's advantage is echoed here in this examination. Again, I repeat, these texts speak more about their authors than they do about the subject matter they want to so clearly describe. They speak of discerning difference to bolster oneself; speaking of absolutes to collapse complex, shifting, changing phenomenon into simpler understandings; creating distance to keep the self pure. It is a sad legacy I feel we academics have inherited; one based in misunderstanding and fear. The idealist in me hopes there is room to move beyond, an endeavour I take in my concluding chapter.

I wonder in this analysis if I am seeing ghosts behind every tree or in every sentence.

Piper (1994) speaks of the pervasive attempts of academics to rigidly confine wîya within a stereotype of black people. Wîya talks of experiencing this phenomenon only in academic circles, perhaps as "a degenerate form of hypothesis-testing, an unfortunate side-effect of the quest for knowledge" (Ibid, pg. 223). Is it that academia is particularly good at the classification, categorization, labelling, etc. that can be so very destructive?

CHAPTER 6

DECONSTRUCTING 'NATIVE' IN THE TEXT

INTRODUCTION

I cannot draw on a unified, singular conclusion which naturally progresses from this text. Being able to state the conclusion as some sort of a natural outpouring of this work would not be consistent with the challenges I am presenting to the linear process of coming to knowledge. I am not alone in this inability to end decisively. Lather does the same:

> "This book is an effort to exceed the socially tolerable boundaries of representation in terms of empirical work in the human sciences. ... It offers no synthesis, no teleological conclusion, as its vision is somewhere other than progressively perfectible systems." (1991, pg. 153)

Instead, Lather concludes in four sections: postscript, epilogue, afterword and coda. I am concluding in a number of disjointed sections, each pieces of the puzzle, each pieces of the building that has been deconstructed and now stands in tatters around me waiting for a creative process to make meaning of the disjoined pieces.

'IT SHOWS HOW FAR WE HAVE TO GO'

I had the honour of attending a brief trial recently. It was a trial concerning whether Milton Born With a Tooth should be sentenced using a sentencing circle or not.

My attendance at this trial was

I have become aware of a difference in my reading. I am a fond user of highlighter pens to bring out the main points of the text which I am reading for easier review. Before, I believed I was bringing out *the* main points but now I see that I select what I find relevant at this time. A later reading with another purpose in mind would bear quite different fruit. This recognition may seem small but I believe it is significant because of how it is tied in with a growing disillusion with absolutes, truth, objectivity, fact, etc. common in post-modern writing. How this growing awareness manifests itself in practice is significant because it opens up new possibilities and ideas.

precipitated by meeting Milton the day before at a conference on the environment I was attending with an indigenous delegation, I as a helper to the indigenous organizer. When we received word of Milton's trial the following day, a delegation was sent to support him. The twenty four hours preceding the trial allowed me to see a very gentle and caring side of Milton as he led our caravan and made arrangements for our group. This disrupted my image of him developed through media reports as a militant, gun-toting warrior. Milton was charged and convicted on weapons-related charges concerning a stand-off between the R.C.M.P. and the Lonefighters. The latter is a warrior society of the Blackfoot Nation committed to the protection of the land and environment, in this case the Old Man River which is being dammed and diverted for irrigation purposes.

I arrived in the court room to find the judge facing the convicted and the crown facing the defence lawyer in a circle of dualisms. The crown announced that they had no major opposition to a sentencing circle in this case and then presented their minor concerns. Nothing seemed very controversial with both sides agreeing. We recessed while the judge made his ruling.

The judge then proceeded to review the information he had about sentencing circles. His construction of the sentencing circle was so neatly defined and limited that I had to pull out my notebook to make notes of the language he used. He suggested that sentencing circles are most suitable in cases where there is a clear community who can supervise the sentence. He spoke frequently of the involvement of

I call Milton by his first name in this story because I find it less awkward than speaking of Born With a Tooth. I wonder at my discomfort with the names that read like phrases so common in Indian country.

I cannot seem to find the right words to present a concise picture of the situation leading to Milton's conviction. The complexities and perspectives are multiple and I feel I sound like a reporter trying to tell the 'facts' when I know that there are many truths.

There were other people in the court room. In the corner, a woman sat on the floor and played with her 19 month old child. In the back row, a man drew graffiti on the bench in front of him: "No Dam Way!" he printed boldly. In another seat, a woman with eyes closed and body posture open sat praying that the judge seek the truth and listen to his heart.

When they talked about the sentencing circle, they spoke of the required rearrangement of the furniture and finding a suitable place for such an event. I imagined a court room with the judges platform, the imposing desks, the solid tables all pushed aside because I could not imagine them outside. How would they squeeze through that small door?

'responsible community members' in the sentencing and the supervision of the sentence leaving me to wonder how 'responsible' would be defined and by whom. The community generally includes the victim(s) of the crime, in this case, the R.C.M.P. and, by extension, the public-at-large. That the public-at-large was not considered part of Milton's community suggests the us/them dichotomy; 'we' being society and 'they' being the 'Other'. The next significant premise in the use of sentencing circles is that the convicted feel remorse and be desirous of rehabilitation. The judge described Milton as having no respect for the law and not appearing to regret his actions. Given this narrowly defined conception of the role of aboriginal values and practices in the sentencing of aboriginal people, the judge concluded against a sentencing circle in this case.

Outside, in the hallway, after the trial, Milton spoke of how very much he appreciated the explanation that the judge had given. He said it exemplified "how far we have yet to go."

The systems and institutions, in this case judicial but I believe educational also, continue to define the terms of reference by which the 'Other' can be and therefore is defined. Nothing will drastically change until this power of definition and representation is subverted.

THINKING OF DIFFERENCES DIFFERENTLY

Fuss (1989) and Butler (1992) both speak about how just when disenfranchised groups and minorities are ascending into a sense of positive identity as subjects they are being confronted by the postmodern

How the community is constructed is a mirage. In the hall way after the trial I heard one of the many Indigenous environmentalists say that she has known Milton a long time; he has slept on her couch when visiting her area; they have shared deeply from their heart. She suggested that possibly this delegation is really his 'community'.

Milton maintains that the only thing that was hurt by his actions were the feelings of the R.C.M.P. officers involved.

Milton's respect for the law is demonstrated in his participation in this legal process.

I originally wanted to suggest that this power of definition and representation needs to be 'reclaimed' but that indicates both that there is a clear and distinct group who has rightful ownership of a tenuous construct and that this ownership is based on previous ownership. I believe neither.

announcement that the subject is now dead.

Piper concurs that the decentring of the essentialized notion of, in wîya's case black, is feared because of the long battle to create self-worth within the system. "[M]any of us are extremely resistant to once again casting ourselves into the same chaos of ethnic and psychological ambiguity our diaspora to this country originally inflicted on us." (Piper, 1994, pg. 234)

In effect, Butler sees this contradiction as a place of great potential. Wîya suggests that it encourages us to look at the existing framework, one which involves a zero sum game in which for some to move up, others must be pushed down. Wîya advocates developing models that do not reproduce the existing dominating and oppressive ones.

> "[T]o deconstruct the subject is not to negate or throw away the concept; on the contrary, deconstruction implies only that we suspend all commitments to that to which the term, 'the subject,' refers, and that we consider the linguistic functions it serves in the consolidation and concealment of authority. To deconstruct is not to negate or to dismiss, but to call into question and, perhaps most importantly, to open up a term, like the subject, to a reusage or redeployment that previously has not been authorized." (Butler, 1992, pg. 15)

Wîya suggests looking at the categories we create as "site[s] of permanent openness and resignifiability" (Ibid, pg. 16) instead of universal groupings designed to solidify. Old essentializing notions are considered

Butler (1992) suggests that this feels a bit like a conspiracy, as one group progresses the other is found to be several steps ahead already setting a new trap.

> "But to describe the ways in which individuals have been dominated through a rigid attachment to particular modern identities is not equivalent to rejecting identity *tout court*. As Ian Hacking notes: 'Foucault said that the concept of Man is a fraud, not that you and I are nothing.' To suggest, as Foucault does, that the human is a social and historical construct is not to discredit every attempt to understand ourselves, but merely to discredit those that claim to be universal" (Sawicki, 1988, pg. 174).

Kerby (1991) talks of the subject being dispersed, fragmented, inconsistent, shifting and every-changing. Maybe it is not so much that the 'subject is dead' but rather our images have changed, transformed, transcended.

To 'deconstruct' is to de/con/struct, to 'de' or undo the 'con' in the structure. To 'con' somebody is to fool them, to gain their 'con'fidence and trust only to abuse it.

irrelevant. Though wîya writes about feminism, wîya's ideas can apply equally to questions of racial or other minority group identity.

Moving out of the old frame

We will need to change the way we think about things. Anzaldúa talks about shouting challenges across the river bank locking oppressor and oppressed into mortal combat. This type of counterstance finds itself confined within the views and beliefs of what it contradicts. "All reaction is limited by, and dependent on, what it is reacting against" (Ibid, pg. 78). Wîya sees the oppression of people based on race as a problem with authority, both outer and inner, requiring solutions that address this level.

> "At some point, on our way to a new consciousness, we will have to leave the opposite bank, the split between the two mortal combatants somehow healed so that we are on both shores at once, and at once, see through serpent and eagle eyes [metaphors for Mexican/Indian and American]" (Ibid, page 78-9)

But more than just a practical, political shifting of frames, we must also see theorizing differently. Trinh Minh-ha (1989) addresses the paradox in theorizing. Theory can threaten because sometimes it upsets rooted ideologies, exposing the mechanics of their operation. Often theory also oppresses or perpetuates existing power relations when it is a means to exert authority. Wîya still finds it "unusual to encounter instances where theory involved the voiding, rather than the affirming or even reiterating, of theoretical categories" (Ibid, pg. 43).

In support of the creative power of essences:

> "We should not, for a moment, underestimate or neglect the importance of the act of imaginative rediscovery which this conception of a rediscovered, essential identity entails." (Hall, 1990, pg. 224)

If the voice of the oppressed is no longer there continually hammering at the oppressor, then the oppressor needs to come to grips with the relationship in entirely different ways (Ellsworth, 1992).

On the radio today, there is talk of the justice system and aboriginal people. I hear a judge quoted on the topic of the over-representation of aboriginal people in Canada's prisons. Wîya says that where once we asked what was wrong with the behaviour of aboriginal people that they ended up in prison so frequently, we have begun to now ask what is wrong with the judicial system that it puts aboriginal people in prison at such an unusually high frequency.

I'm noticing my heavy reliance on other's texts in this section, frequently quoting the experts, those written and published. I wonder if it is a reflection of my own sense of inadequacy concerning my theorizing, my ideas; or rather a reflection of the intertextuality of all writing, that nothing is new under the sun only repeated in differing formulations.

New frames

I'm suggestive of moving out of old frames but I provide very little in terms of how these new ideas might look. There are two that I will delve into a bit here, one being Bhabha's (1990) theorizing on hybridity and the other being Anzaldúa's (1987) conception of the *mestiza*.

To get at the notion of hybridity, Bhabha draws on ideas about cultural diversity versus difference. Let me follow wîya's developments. Cultural diversity is based in the liberal tradition of philosophical relativism. It sees cultures as diverse and believes in their appreciation. The universalism it promotes paradoxically encourages racism by masking the ethnocentric norms, values and interests underlying it. Though there is an appreciation of cultural diversity, there is a *containment* of cultural difference. The universalizing and normative stance within cultural diversity cannot deal with difference, it cannot deal with other cultures constructing themselves differently. Diversity continues to look for an underlying essence or universal concept such as 'human being, 'class' or 'race' to give itself meaning.

Cultural diversity thinking is the foundation of our multicultural policy.

Bhabha then turns to 'cultural translation'. Cultures are not the same in contents but they do all constitute subjects and form symbols. This signifying process is a form of representation and as such is realized in the distance between the signifier and the signified, the word and the object it describes. In cultural translation, this alienation of culture in relation to itself opens up the possibility of articulating *difference*. Essentialism is denied in this vision of culture as representative. Representation is continually deferred

Derrida's notion of 'différence' in French is between the English verbs to differ and to defer or postpone meaning.

and staggered never finished or complete. It keeps on moving to encompass other, additional or supplementary meanings disturbing fixed notions of identity (Hall, 1990).

Hybridity is not the emergence of a position stemming from two original movements. Rather Bhabha's 'third space' displaces both histories from which it is constituted, it "sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom" (Bhabha, 1990, pg. 211). It is something different, something new and unrecognisable, a new place from which negotiation of meaning and representation can take place.

> "The diaspora experience as I intend it here is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by *hybridity*. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference." (Hall, 1990, pg. 235)

Bhabha talks of the fragmentation of identity as "the alienation of the self in the construction of forms of solidarity" (1990, pg. 213).

> "It is only by losing the sovereignty of the self that you can gain the freedom of a politics that is open to the non-assimilationist claims of cultural difference. The crucial feature of this new awareness is that it doesn't need to totalise in order to legitimate political action or cultural practice" (Ibid).

The word 'hybrid' speaks of me of plants and gardens. I have read gardening catalogues praise hybrid plants for their strength developed through crossing the gene pools. I am not convinced, partly because of my disbelief in the claims of scientific progress and partly because many of these plants are unfertile and I don't believe we have really considered what it means, by implication, to eat food that is non-fertile over an extended period of time.

Bhabha rejects the liberal notion of 'identity' as a basis for political action and sees potential in shifting, moving, continually redefining identities. Instead of fixing solid communities, 'imagined communities' can continually form and reform in ways that disrupt essentialist notions and yet permit political action (Mohanty, 1991).

Anzaldúa (1987) suggests that the future depends on breaking down paradigms, on straddling two or more cultures. Wîya posits that the future belongs to those of mixed blood, the *mestiza*. The *mestiza* consciousness breaks down the subject-object duality, transcending its limitations. "A massive uprooting of dualistic thinking in the individual and collective consciousness is the beginning" (Ibid, pg. 80).

This new way is not fearful of the complexity it embraces.

> "The new *mestiza* copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity. ... She (sic) learns to juggle cultures. She has a plural personality, she operates in a pluralistic mode--nothing is thrust out, the good, the bad and the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned. Not only does she sustain contradictions, she turns the ambivalence into something else." (Ibid, pg. 79)

This plural consciousness can understand a multiple of often opposing ideas and knowledges, negotiating within them instead of taking a counterstance. This uproots dualistic thinking suggesting a reconceptualization of power, authority and consciousness within knowledges that are contradictory.

I'm not sure if it's me or the literature that keeps returning to the importance of political action. Part of me feels we need to redefine what is meant here, taking these terms and ideas away from the oppositional politics in which resistance and political opposition are framed through critical theory.

It is true, the largest growing racial category in the world is that of mixed blood.

Being in the new frame

In a letter from my cousin, he drew my attention to some Jungian theorizing that made the distinction between assimilation and accommodation. From my understanding of my cousin's context, assimilation is the total absorption of new phenomenon into the old. Accommodation is an adjustment or change in the old to make room for the new. My use of 'old' and 'new' is purely explanatory for I believe this can also reference cultures' adjustment to one another, people's adjustments to each other, theory's adaptation to new information, and so much more.

I am reminded again of the spiral of which I spoke in my first chapter. Sometimes it appears that we approach the same place when indeed we have moved further along in the circle for it is a spiral and not a circle. Often this place is closely related to another former place and draws heavily upon its past. The new information has not been assimilated but has rather accommodated a new positioning.

In this new place I find myself again facing the use of existing taxonomies. In my story of Milton's trial, I frame things in an old language of two distinct ways of being, one being imposed upon the other. This classification system is difficult to let go yet its transience, its shifting and continual reshaping are part of what I now want to emphasize.

The other part comes back again to how knowledge is constructed, the premises upon which we base what we know, the foundational beliefs that inform our thinking. To this effect, I offer my story of the bear next. But before I do this, I wish to reiterate Said's challenge:

Someone suggested that these ideas belong to Piaget and not Jung. I wonder at the ownership of ideas when people begin to dialogue.

That is why the old Indian policy was assimilationist, not accommodationist.

The single most significant learning for me in this exercise has been to see the processes by which knowledge is constructed. I have learned to question and become critical in an entirely new way, continually poking at underlying assumptions to see which lions lie there sleeping. It is the foundations that I am questioning. I guess it is no wonder that I am in the Department of Educational Foundations, at least I was until it was changed to Educational Policy Studies through a merger.

> "Perhaps the most important task of all would be to undertake studies in contemporary alternatives to Orientalism, to ask how one can study other cultures and peoples from a libertarian, or a nonrepressive and nonmanipulative, perspective. But then one would have to rethink the whole complex problem of knowledge and power." (1979, pg. 24)

THE BEAR

I arrived late to the cottage where my family was gathering for the holiday weekend. It was a clear, star-filled night as I set up my tent nearby deciding to dispose of the necessity of the fly as protection against rain.

In the morning, I felt refreshed as I sat up to look through the screens of my tent out onto the mist covered lake. My eyes immediately focused on a large brown bear walking towards me. Our eyes met. But something did not happen that I had become accustomed to feeling when encountering bears. Adrenalin did not pump through my veins, my heart did not race, my mind did not fixate on escape plans - I felt no fear. I inherently knew that the bear did not want to harm me. We watched each other carefully for a time, ascertaining that neither was a threat to the other. Eventually, noises from the cabin scared my new friend away. Over the days that I was there, I did not hesitate to venture into the berry patch alone for though this was a likely place to again encounter the bear, I felt safe.

The teachings from this experience emerged much later. I reflected on the lack of fear and saw it as a kind of

I'm reluctant to tell this story because of its stereotypical 'Native' storytelling mode. It is a story from nature talking about learnings derived from contact therewith. It reminds me of the poem with which I began this work.

My lack of fear of the bear is hard won. I have encountered many bears through my love of spending time in the woods. I have inadvertently passed between a mother and her cub without receiving her wrath. Up until now, despite countless positive experiences, I still feared.

resolution with the world as it exists instead of fear of its many manifestations. The layers of this fear began to peel away. Things I had feared in myself were the first to be shaken out in the light of day. Many are the internal fears that have kept me bound in unpleasant thinking or situations.

Next was the fear of nature, a fear of people/places/things I encounter in my environment. I saw them as also not intending to hurt me. This seemed counter to a deeply ingrained belief that we need always be cautious to see the 'wrong' and vigilant in our resistance. The myth that sprung to my mind was that of original sin or this feeling that something is intrinsically wrong from the beginning both within and around us.

I think of critical theorists as deeply entrenched in this need for change to improve, to better the world. The metanarratives of progress or at least of absolution are pervasive in our culture at this time. If the postmodernists are true in their announcement of the end of modernity, what new type of resolution will we find with ourselves in relation to our world? How much of our new positioned meanings can uproot themselves from mythologies based in fear? Do we fear the bear or do we live with it respectfully? Do we fear the 'Other'? Do we fear the 'Other' in ourselves?

BUT I'M WHITE

Anzaldúa (1987) talks of the reluctance of many people of colour to work with white do-gooders. Wĩya explains the difficulty in explaining to "downwardly mobile, white middle-class

I went berry picking with my pre-school niece the next day and in her boredom, she asked me to tell her a story. I found myself telling a story about a much misunderstood man who lived in the woods. He was gentle and kind yet his fearful appearance kept others at a distance. In my story, this man transformed into the bear, an ending which surprised even me in the telling. Days later, my niece encountered the bear again with her father and he marvelled at her lack of fear. Through example, in this case combined with story, we can teach young people to see the world differently.

When I speak of the fear of 'nature' I am aware of the way that I am positioning it against 'culture' or 'civilization'. What I really mean is a fear of *all* that is.

I am writing this story a month after it happened wishing I had written it immediately for I already fear I have lost some of the significance it held for me at the time. I remember telling the story to several people close to me at the time that it happened. One was a Native friend and she told me that this is what I needed to write in my thesis, this understanding of fear and 'Native'/nature was significant. Although I agree, I struggle with the strong connection between nature and 'Native'.

Interesting that it was a 'brown' bear.

I resent being called 'downwardly mobile'.

women" the material aspirations of those who have never had much. Wîya does see a role for people like me, but not in 'helping' so much as in following others' lead.

Pratt speaks of moving to a city in which wîya knew wîya would be a minority. Wîya's move involved letting go of the worldview that had placed wîya in it at the centre as a superior race and culture. This was never the truth even though it was deeply entrenched in wîya's belief system. Instead of living in the world the way wîya was raised to see it, wîya needed to live in the world the way it *is*. There's a certain humility with which this work needs to be approached, a letting go of conceptions of others and also of oneself.

Frankenberg (1993) reminds us that we are all constructed through reference to race, even 'white' people who find themselves in the normalising category against which 'Others' are measured.

hooks (1989) writes about preferring the idea of overcoming 'white supremacy' rather than 'racism' because it can then be seen as an ideology within which we are all contained, both black and white. This allowed liberal whites to see how they embody white-supremacist values, beliefs and behaviours despite their overt rejection of racism.

Wîya talks about how black people are often asked by whites to do the work of ending white supremacy (by this very wording wîya refutes this stance). Black people cannot do the work for white people. "Rejecting the work does not mean that we cannot and do not show the way by our actions, by the information we share" (Ibid, pg.

Anzaldúa's speech to white society:

> "We need you to accept the fact that Chicanos are different, to acknowledge your rejection and negation of us. We need you to own the fact that you looked upon us as less than human, that you stole our lands, our personhood, our self-respect. We need you to make public restitution: to say that, to compensate for your own sense of defectiveness, you strive for power over us, you erase our history and our experience because it makes you feel guilty--you'd rather forget your brutish acts. . By taking back your collective shadow the intercultural split will heal." (1987, pg. 85-6)

> "I believe that the perceptual and cognitive distortions that characterize any form of racism begin here, in the failure to see any such act of racist aggression as a defensive response to one's perceived attack on the aggressor's physical or psychological property, or conception of himself (sic), or of the world. Once you see this, you may feel helpless to be anything other than who you are, anything or anyone who could resolve the discord. But at least it restores a sense of balance and mutually flawed humanity to the interaction." (Piper, 1994, pg. 219)

118). Wîya believes whites and blacks must work together. Both must work not only as individuals but also together on structures.

I am suggesting that the winds of change in our current concept of 'Native' in native education are not exclusively generated from 'Native' people. It involves something other than a stronger entrenchment of what 'Native' is that only those members of the category can establish. The answers are not to be found in a better, more accurate description of 'Cree' or 'Woodland Cree'.

Why more defining doesn't work:

> "The white in power want us people of color to barricade ourselves behind our separate tribal walls so they can pick us off one at a time with their hidden weapons" (Anzaldúa, 1987, pg. 86).

There is a place for people like me, people who humbly and respectfully say that they don't know but that they want to learn. People who are willing to see the world as Pratt's concentric circles rippling in a pond rather than from the courthouse tower. People who are willing to recognize the interconnection in all rather than the separation between while paradoxically needing to accept the differences.

HEALING

Weber-Pillwax (1992) challenges the value system upon which Native education is built. In wîya's experience, cultures collide, they do not simply 'contact'. There is an interconnection that takes place upon this meeting, one that involves drawing one from the other. The non-Native culture with which wîya has been in contact has not been very tolerant of difference and able to incorporate much of the impact of a collision. Wîya questions whether the dominant value system supports co-existence with other cultures and societies.

Despite wîya's disillusionment about dominant society's ability to shift and move, wîya still sees potential:

> "In order to effect necessary major changes to native education today, and to simultaneously move it in a positive direction, an essential and radical shift must take place in the frame of mind of everyone involved. This cognitive shift must take place in the individual. It may be prompted through individual or group experience; it may be planned or unplanned. However it happens, we must individually assess our 'knowledge about knowledge' as part of our human process, and we must determine the connection between our different social realities and our different ways of shaping these realities. Through all of this, our individuality may unfold through new levels of meaning in our lives, new levels which will enable us to shape more self-respecting societies." (Ibid, pg. 64)

Wîya's focus toward resolution involving individual change is one I am more and more beginning to see. The term 'healing' comes to mind. It is a process by which individuals work through the barriers within ourselves as they have been structured by the larger society which forms us. It is a taking of responsibility for one's actions and reactions to the disciplining forces around us (Marshall, 1989). For me, it has involved working with a new (to me) more open sense of responsibility at the mâmawonanâtawihow'kamik. This means learning from the bear. It also means questioning the very premises upon which knowledge is formed in this work.

I know of a 'Native' woman who spent years working to change the structures that kept her people down. She has now shifted her focus to healing work that helps make all people strong to resist these structures that affect us all.

hooks (1989) would not concur that 'individual healing' is a significant solution. Wîya does talk of the importance of the personal in political transformation but she warns of being seduced into personal development at the expense of collective action. Wîya gives this admonition in regard to women in the feminist movement opting for personal change. Wîya suggests this is a return to old patterns in which women are responsible for male domination. Though I hear wîya's critique of the healing model, I also suggest that it is open to both 'oppressed' and 'oppressor' for we are all part of the problem and therefore part of the solution. I also believe that as individual healing takes place, communities and groups will emerge and take action.

Mohanty (1991) also sees the significance of individual contributions. Wîya suggests that not all struggles can be seen as 'organized' movements. There are struggles in everyday life at very personal levels. She even suggests autobiography as one of the methods of non-organized agency.

Anzaldúa speaks about the struggle being an inner one, played out in the outer terrains. Awareness is of prime importance. "Nothing happens in the 'real' world unless it first happens in the images in our heads" (1987, pg. 87)

Weber-Pillwax continues:

> "The 'right' persons are not found in any particular cultural group or society. They are found individually within all culture, but their beings have transcended cultural boundaries. Their actions express the understanding that it is individuals who co-create their different societies and, at the same time, co-create the global community. They will naturally support any child to live his (sic) own culture, and to respect all others." (1992, pg. 91-2)

Language is also an issue for wîya. "Individuals from both societies need new words to dialogue and shape a world which allows them to transcend cultural descriptions and yet respect cultural differences" (Ibid, pg. 73). Sometimes this shift in language involves the reclaiming of derogatory words such as bumper stickers that speak of being 'Proud to be Indian'.

To me, healing recreates communities and temporary solidities as it has done for me at the mâmawonanâtawihow'kamik. Our being together is a political act. Being a mixed group that

I can only reaffirm that autobiography is a powerful tool to help one work through ideas. It has been my experience in this work.

In working on an indigenous gathering, I remember the feeling of pride I had when my supervisor told me some of the feedback she had received from the participants as to my behaviour. She said I was being accepted because I was respectful not imposing. I know that I had watched and listened carefully because there were so very many dynamics that I knew I did not fully understand (différence). But then, I was afforded that role in my position as a helper. Had I arrived as an expert in the field around which we were gathering, my passivity might not have been as well received.

This process goes both ways. I recently listened to a radio phone-in program asking the question "Are you proud to be a Red-necked Albertan?" I have always associated 'Red-neck' with racism and intolerance yet I was being told the version of which some people were proud spoke of independence and being against too much government. Reclaiming words takes place in all quarters.

intentionally does not fit into existing structures is an act of political resistance to those structures. It is one that no longer involves being at the other side of the river bank fixed in eternal opposition rather it is an active position of taking responsibility in the recreating of the world as we want it to be. We are a mixed group of 'Native' and 'non-Native', straddling Anzaldúa's riverbank.

Piper speaks of community in the working through of racism. Wîya talks of racism being present in all of us: black, white, yellow and red. We have all been encultured into a racist society.

> "The question should not be whether any individual is racist; that we all are to some extent should be a given. The question should be, rather, how we handle it once it appears. I believe our energy would be better spent on creating structured, personalized community forums for naming, confronting, owning and resolving these feelings rather than trying to evade, deny, or suppress them." (Piper, 1994, pg. 243-4)

Bhabha (1990) talks about political struggles within a new form of identity. Relevant for wîya is the idea of negotiation because as things continue to shift and new sites emerge they are able to be engaged productively and creatively through negotiation. Political activity, be it progressive or radical, involves all of these shifting negotiations, reformations and reformulations that lead to reform and, when engaged in quickly, to revolution. But this involves always being ready and willing to rethink and renegotiate how the principles are translated to make use of the new space that is

Notice how I did not say creating a 'better' world rather a world as we want it to be. Metanarratives are being rejected.

I find this forum in the talking circles where we speak our truth. Sometimes this truth is not 'pretty', especially when it concerns racism, but I have heard it spoken in these healing forums.

continually emerging.

I feel my lack of answers, of a conclusion, as an inadequacy. Instead of trying to fulfil this sense with myths and illusions, I wish to learn to live with it, to live with the 'Other' in me.

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The words here are not all mine for they have come to me from those generous enough to have shared their insights, thoughts, time, feelings and spirits with me. Some are colleagues, some old friends, some acquaintances, but all have contributed significantly. To me, these people belong in a reference list because of my referencing of their ideas. I would like to list and thereby thank those I can consciously acknowledge as contributors: Katherine Altman, Marilyn Assheton-Smith, Mike Auger, Dolan Badger, Arlette Barette, Milton Born With a Tooth, Doug Brown, Joe C., Judy Davidson, Denys, Mishi Donovan, Cathy Downton, Roszan Fidler-Walker, Gloria Filax, Gerry, Jan Jagodzinski, David Kales, Frank Kootenay, Jane Kreiner, Klaus Dieter Kreiner, Henry Laboucan, Denise Lambert, Lena Lambert, Roy Lambert, Debbie Mandamin, Marjorie Memnook, Judy Meyers, Vern Meyers, Barbara Nichols, Betty Norris-Profitt, Gwen Orechia, Helga Poehlmann, David Rosser, Lorraine Sinclair, Jenny Spencer, Soulien Stone-Eagle, Ken Ward, Peggy Wilson, Stan Wilson, Yoke Sum Wong and Azeb Zemariam.

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APPENDIX 1

THE OFFICIAL OBJECTIVES OF THE 'MÂMAWONÂNATAWIHOW'KAMIK'

The objectives of the society are:

a) To provide a suitable meeting place for ongoing spiritual, physical, emotional, mental, recreational, social and cultural activities of the members.

b) To develop programs that address the needs of children, youth, adults and elders.

c) To educate individuals about the wholistic healing process that begins with the self to immediate and extended family, community, nation and Mother Earth.

d) To support, share and assist with related initiatives dedicated to the wholistic healing and growth.

e) To reaffirm the values, philosophy and customs of Aboriginal/Indigenous people.

f) To acquire, sell, manage, lease, mortgage, or contract for resources necessary to the activities of the society.

APPENDIX 2

CENSUS CANADA STATISTICS ON ABORIGINAL ORIGIN

Table 1 - Aboriginal origin by year.

	1991	1986	1981*
Single aboriginal origin	470,615	373,260	
Multiple aboriginal origin	532,060	338,460	
Total aboriginal origin	1,002,675	711,720	413,380

* The 1981 definitions were somewhat different than 1986 and 1991. The former gives a grouping entitled 'Native people' which includes Inuit, Métis, status or registered Indian and non-status Indian. This census is also heavily based upon descent on the paternal line, therefore not allowing the range of multiple ethnic origins made available in future census data. The 1986 and 1991 census data contains three categories of Aboriginal ethnic origin: Inuit, North American Indian and Métis.

I believe that some of the difficulties census takers have in developing and maintaining meaningful categories are indicative of the problematic I am presenting in this thesis.

APPENDIX 3

PERRY'S VERSION OF CHIEF SEATTLE'S SPEECH
(MY SUBSEQUENT ADAPTATION)

How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air or the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them?

Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sand shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing and humming insect is holy in the memory of my people. The sap which courses through the trees carries the memory of red people.

White people forget the country of their birth when they go to walk among the stars. Our dead never forget this beautiful earth, for it is the parent of the red people. We are part of the earth and it is part of us. The perfumed flowers are our siblings; the deer, the great horse, the great eagle, are also our siblings. The rocky crests, the juices of the meadows, the body heat of the pony, and all living things belong to the same family.

So when the Great Chief in Washington sends word that wîya wishes to buy our land wîya asks much of us. The great Chief sends word wîya will reserve us a place so that we can live comfortably to ourselves. Wîya will be our parent and we will be wîya's children. So we will consider your offer to buy our land. But it will not be easy. For this land is sacred to us.

This shining water that moves in the streams and rivers is not just water but the blood of our ancestors. If we sell you land, you must remember that it is sacred, and you must teach your children that it is sacred and that each ghostly reflection in the clear water of the lakes tells of events and memories in the life of my people. The water's murmur is the voice of my grandparents.

The rivers are our siblings, they quench our thirst. The rivers carry our canoes and feed our children. If we sell you our land, you must remember and teach your children, that the rivers are our siblings and yours, and you must henceforth give the rivers kindness you would give any sibling.

We know white people do not understand our ways. One portion of the land is the same to them as the next, for they are strangers who come from the night and takes from the land whatever they need. The earth is not their siblings, it is their enemy, and when they have conquered it they move on. They leaves their parent's graves behind, and they do not care. Their parent's graves and their children's birthright are forgotten. They treat their parent, the earth, and their sibling, the sky, as things to be bought, plundered, sold like sheep or bright beads. Their appetite will devour the earth and leave behind only the desert.

I do not know. Our ways are different than your ways. The sight of your cities pains the eyes of red people. But perhaps it is because red people are savage and do not understand.

There is no place quiet in white people's cities. No place to hear the unfurling of leaves in the spring, or the rustle of insects wings. But perhaps it is because I am savage and do not understand. The clatter only seems to insult the ears. And what is there to life if a person cannot hear the lonely cry of the whippoorwill or the arguments of frogs around a pond at night? I am a red person and do not understand. The Indian prefers the soft wound of the wind darting over the face of the pond, and the smell of the wind itself, cleansed by a midday rain, or scented with pinon pine.

The air is precious to red people, for all things share the same breath--the beasts, the trees, the people--they all share the same breath. White people do not seem to notice the air they breathe. Like someone dying for many days, they are numb to the stench. But if we sell our land, you must remember that the air is precious to us, that the air shares its spirit with all life it supports. The wind that gave our grandparent's their first breath also receives their last sigh. And if we sell you our land, you must keep it apart and sacred, as well as a place where even white people can go to taste the wind that is sweetened by the meadow's flowers.

So we will consider your offer to buy our land. If we decide to accept, I will make one condition: white people must treat the beasts of this lands as his siblings.

I am a savage and do not understand any other way. I have seen a thousand rotting buffalos on the prairie, left by white people who shot them from a passing train. I am a savage and do not understand how the smoking iron horse can be more important than the buffalo; that we kill only to stay alive.

What are people without beasts? If all the beasts are gone, people would die from great loneliness of spirit. For whatever happens to the beasts soon happens to people. All things are connected.

You must teach your children that the ground beneath their feet is the ashes of our grandparents. So that they will respect the land, tell your children that the earth is rich with the lives of our kin. Teach your children that the earth is our parent. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the children of the earth. If people spit on the ground, they spit on themselves.

This we know; the earth does not belong to anyone. This we know. All things are connected like the blood that unites one family. All things are connected.

Whatever befalls the earth befalls the children of the earth. People did not weave the web of life: we are merely a strand in it. Whatever we do to the web we do to ourselves.

Even white people whose god walks and talks to with them as friend to friend cannot be exempt from common destiny. We may be siblings after all. We shall see. One thing we know, which the white people may one day discover--our god is the same god. You may think now you own god as you wish to own our land; but you cannot. God is the god of people and wĩya's compassion is equal for red people and white. This earth is precious to wĩya, and to harm the earth is to heap contempt on its Creator. The white people too shall pass, perhaps sooner than all other tribes. Contaminate your bed, and you will one night suffocate in your own waste.

But in your perishing you will shine brightly, fired by the strength of the god who brought you to this land and for some special purpose gave you dominion over this land and the red people. That destiny is a mystery to us, for we do not understand when the buffalo are all slaughtered, the wild horses are tamed, and the secret corners of the forest are heavy with the scent of many people, the view of the hills blotted with talking wires. Where is the thicket? Where is the eagle? GONE: THE END OF LIVING AND THE BEGINNING OF SURVIVAL.

APPENDIX 4

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APPENDIX 5

PARKER'S CRITERIA FOR DISTINGUISHING DISCOURSES

1) A discourse is realised in texts

The view of texts that Parker presents is a broad view that sees bus tickets, tarot cards, fashion systems, stained glass, advertisements, braille, etc. as texts. They are texts because they contain meaning that can be interpreted. It is in texts that discourse resides and can therefore be examined as to its interpretive possibilities.

Wîya therefore suggests two steps for analysis of discourses realised in texts:

a) treating our objects of study as texts which are described, and put into words; and
b) exploring connotations through some sort of free association, which is best done with other people.

My use of a book as the subject of discourse analysis gives me an object of study which is already in textual/word form so the translation suggested in "a" above is not relevant to this project. I will explore some connotations of the meanings both of the text and of the articles contained in it, though not, as Parker suggests in "b", with other people.

2) A discourse is about objects

I have spoken previously about the notion of 'representation' to which Parker refers in this section. This is the idea that a word often refers more to other words and it does to an actual, concrete object. Discourse is the process of using words to 'represent' something, suggestive of the actual 'object' yet more closely tied to other discourses about objects. Parker suggests two layers of reality, that of the actual, concrete object and that of the discourses that construct the object. In this way, wîya's two steps of analysis consider both:

c) asking what objects are referred to, and describing them; and
d) talking about the talk as if it were an object, a discourse.

I do not share Parker's realism in his analysis and would have difficulty making comment on "c" as I have pointed out some of the challenges related to descriptions of natives in the last two chapters. I am, however, extremely interested in examining the texts as discourses as in "d".

3) A discourse contains subjects

Discourses are spoken, written, heard, viewed, read, etc. As such, they involve a subject, a person, a self who enters in. A relationship is formed, not between the self and the author but rather between the self and the discourse. The self and the discourse are both positioned by the interplay between them in this relationship.

Parker suggests the following steps of analysis related to subjects:

e) specifying what types of people are talked about in this discourse, some of which may already have been identified as objects; and
f) speculating about what they can say in the discourse, what you could say if you identified with them (what rights to speak in that way of speaking).

Though the people who are talked about in the discourse are most interesting ("e"), I believe the intended audience of the literature I am reviewing would be of more relevance to this work. Who is given voice in certain discourses, the point of item "f", is also significant in this analysis. I would like to add to this a third step involving the range of subject responses that are opened or closed by the nature of the discourse.

4) A discourse is a coherent system of meanings

Discourses are regulated systems of meaning that provide coherence. One indicator of this is the repetition of certain phrases or systems of terms used to characterize and evaluate. To examine the coherency of the text, wîya suggests:

g) mapping a picture of the world this discourse presents; and
h) working out how a text using this discourse would deal with objections to the terminology.

Both of these points of analysis are of interest to me here.

5) A discourse refers to other discourses

Discourses do not occur in a vacuum and as such involve an interplay with other discourses. Parker suggests that we "employ culturally available understanding as to what constitutes a topic or theme, here making a virtue of the fact that there are different competing cultures which will give different slants on the discourse." (pg. 11)

Wîya suggests:

i) setting contrasting ways of speaking, discourses, against each other and looking at the different objects they constitute; and
j) identifying points where they overlap, where they constitute what look like the 'same' objects in different ways.

The difficulty with these two steps is the selection of contrasting discourses. I could select the policy (federal government or Assembly of First Nations) discourse on native education to contrast with the academic discourse but this would be beyond the scope of this work. Instead, I would like to point out where I can see the allusions to other discourses in the work under study.

6) A discourse reflects on its own way of speaking

I have spoken previously about the workings of binarisms. This is the examination of covert meanings lying behind the words, phrases and expressions used.

k) referring to other texts to elaborate the discourse as it occurs, perhaps implicitly, and addresses different audiences; and
l) reflecting on the term used to describe the discourse, a matter which involves moral/political choices on the part of the analyst

Both of these steps could prove to be fruitful in exposing some underlying dynamics of the discourse.

7) A discourse is historically located

Discourses have a sense of history in time being constituted from previous discourses. This item would examine the emergence of certain discourses by examining them in relation to other discourses, particularly those which precede it in time.

m) looking at how and where the discourses emerged; and
n) describing how they have changed, and told a story, usually about how they refer to things which were always there to be discovered

I cannot neglect the precedents of the current position.

8) Discourses support institutions

> "[T]he employment of a discourse is also often a practice which reproduces the material basis of the institution" (pg. 17). This criteria looks at how certain institutions are supported by the discourse and others are hindered.

o) identifying institutions which are reinforced when this or that discourse is used; and
p) identifying institutions that are attacked or subverted when this or that discourse appears

The full exploration of this and the next two criteria would contain the body of an entire thesis. Though I may allude to these, I fear I will not be able to do them full justice in this work.

9) Discourses reproduce power relations

Power is inherent in discourses and cannot be separated from them. There are innumerable ways in which that power may manifest itself. Parker suggests looking at two areas:

q) Looking at which categories of person gain and lose from the employment of the discourse; and
r) Looking at who would want to promote and who would want to dissolve the discourse

To me this seems only an initial examination of the power dynamics at work.

10) Discourses have ideological effects.

Parker suggests viewing ideology as descriptive of relationships and effects rather than an object of analysis.

s) showing how a discourse connects with other discourses which sanction oppression; and
t) showing how the discourses allow dominant groups tot ell their narratives about the past in order to justify the present, and prevent those who use subjugated discourses from making history.